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Vol. 11 Summer and Winter 1989 Nos. 1 and 2

DAVID SHELLEY BERKELEY	Claudius the Villein King of Denmark
CAROLE T. DIFFEY	"Such large discourse": the Role of Godlike Reason in *Hamlet*
RACHEL V. BILLIGHEIMER	Diversity in the Hamlets of the Eighteenth-Century Stage in England, France and Germany
DAVID L. POLLARD	Belatedness in *Hamlet*

19/7/90

Notes, Production Reports, and Reviews by

MacD. P. Jackson, Pralay Kumar Deb, Robert F. Willson, Jr, A. Banerjee, Georgi Todorov, W. Hutchings, Joan Hutton Landis, Robert F. Fleissner, Ruby Chatterji, R.W. Desai

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HAMLET STUDIES

Vol 11 Summer and Winter 1989 Nos. 1 and 2

Contributors to this Issue 3

Notes and Comments 6

DAVID SHELLEY BERKELEY — Claudius the Villein King of Denmark 9

CAROLE T. DIFFEY — "Such large discourse": the Role of "Godlike reason" in *Hamlet* 22

RACHEL V. BILLIGHEIMER — Diversity in the Hamlets of the Eighteenth-Century Stage in England, France and Germany 34

DAVID L. POLLARD — Belatedness in *Hamlet* 49

Notes:

MacD.P. JACKSON — Editing *Hamlet* in the 1980's Textual Theories and Textual Practices 60

PRALAY KUMAR DEB — Coleridge on *Hamlet* 73

ROBERT F. WILLSON JR. — Hamlet's Ghostly Presence 80

A. BANERJEE — The Man Who Knew Hamlet: Trewin's Recollections of the Prince of Denmark 87

Productions

GEORGI TODOROV — *Hamlet:* Tragical, Comical, Historical, Pastoral, Political 91

Reviews

W. HUTCHINGS — A Review of Periodical Articles (1989-90) 97

JOAN HUTTON LANDIS — *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture.* By David Bevington 100

R.W. DESAI — *'King Lear' and the Gods.* By William R. Elton

Shakespeare: The Play of History. By Graham Holderness, Nick Pootter and John Turner 106

RUBY CHATTERJI — *'Hamlet' and the Acting of Revenge.* By Peter Mercer 112

ROBERT F. FLEISSNER — *Geethe's 'Faust': The German Tragedy.* By Jane K. Brown 117

JACK J. JORGENS — *Hamlet: Film, Television, and Performance.* By Bernice W. Kliman 120

Contributors to this Issue

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Notes and Comments

Like Keats's Grecian Urn, *Hamlet* "tease[s] us out of thought/As doth eternity." Hamlet upbraids Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for trying to "pluck out the heart of [his] mystery." By Hamlet's definition, then, all criticism being an a attempt to 'get at' something, whether it be indeterminacy as with Deconstruction, or pluralism as with conventional criticism, is a Rosen-Guild activity and, therefore, perverse. Resentful though we might feel at this aspersion, the redeeming feature that vindicates, and even justifies, our profession is Hamlet's self-examination: "Yet I/A dull and muddy-metled rascal, peak/Like John-a-dreams"; "How all occasions do inform against me, /And spur my dull revenge"; and to the Ghost, "Do you not come your tardy son to chide. . . ?" Hamlet is as mystified by, and analytical of, his own behaviour as posterity has been from Dr. Johnson onwards. Hamlet is his own most exacting critic. We are merely following his example. Perhaps it was Dr. Johnson who first recognized 'delay' as a critical issue in the play:

> After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the King, he makes no attempt to punish him . . .
>
> (Note on *Hamlet* in *The Plays of William Shakespeare*. 1765)

The only living person who has some inkling of Hamlet's mystery (apart from Horatio) is Claudius, and after the staging of 'The Murder of Gonzago,' he knows that Hamlet knows *his* mystery. But Claudius doesn't know how, or by what means, Hamlet's suspicions were aroused, nor how he has been able to reconstruct the crime so accurately. Hamlet has struck at the heart of Claudius's mystery. What Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are trying to do to Hamlet, Hamlet has successfully done to Claudius. What was indeterminate, surrounded by incertitude, lacking an objective reality or empirical truth, has now been established and proven by Claudius's own admission of his guilt, the first time hinted at before the staging of 'The Murder of Gonzago' in his "How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience," and the second time in a full confession on his knees after 'The Murder of Gonzago,' "O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven . . . /A brother's murder."

Hamlet uncovers the truth and, despite the play's many indeterminacies (Does divinity shape the play's ends, or mere chance? Is Fortinbras's arrival good for Denmark, or bad? Would Hamlet, "had he been put on," "have prov'd most royal"? and so on), the one great question is resolved; despite many absences, this one presence is established beyond doubt. By the same token, there can be varying degrees of critical endeavour, some more definitive than others.

Yet, ironically, Hamlet never hears Claudius actually confess to the crime as we, the audience, do when Claudius is on his knees. True, he has struck at the heart of Claudius's mystery, but he has not really plucked out the heart of the mystery. In fact, *we* are more sure of the truth than Hamlet (or Horatio) can ever be. The ambiguous text that Hamlet reads is limited to the single, doubtful signifier of Claudius's consternation ("Give me some light. Away."), whereas the text that we read goes considerably beyond this for, in his prayer, Claudius refers directly to the fratricide at least thrice ("A brother's murder"; "with brother's blood"; "my foul murder"). Thus *we* know more than Hamlet, but this privilege is ours only because of Hamlet's intervention. Even Horatio's report at the end ("Report me and my cause aright") will not quite measure up to what we know to be the absolute truth.

As has been pointed out in *Hamlet Studies* and elsewhere, if the poisoned cup is Hamlet's revenge for the murder of his father, the rapier thrust is his revenge for the plot against his own life hatched by Claudius with Laertes as an agent. Since Hamlet has no way of establishing Claudius's guilt before "a public count"—for even if the presence of poison is established by an autopsy, this will not necessarily implicate Claudius; rather, Gertrude will seem a more likely suspect—the only alternative he has is to induce/tempt Claudius to commit a second murder by presenting himself as a murderee:

> Josephine disappeared through the nearest bathroom door. She looked back to say:
>
> > "I should say it's about time for the next murder, wouldn't you?"
> > "What do you mean—the next murder?"
> > "Well, in books there's always a second murder about now. Someone who knows something is bumped off before they can tell what they know."
>
> (Agatha Christie, *Crooked House,* New York: Pocket Books, Cardinal edition, 1960, p. 134)

The problem of course is that Hamlet has to convert Claudius's trap into his trap, offer his own person as bait ("Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes"), and then, with split-second timing, extricate himself and slam the door shut on Claudius.

> O, 'tis most sweet
> When in one line two crafts directly meet.

From being a critic, Hamlet must now become an artist.

* * *

The first article in this volume, by David Shelley Berkeley, focuses on Claudius as "villein" (or "villain"), that is, not the son of his putative father, but the degenerate product of Hamlet's grandmother having strayed out of wedlock. Farfetched? But after reading the article one may not be as sceptical as is one's immediate reaction to a bald summary like the one above.

Though addressing herself to a completely different critical question—whether Hamlet's delay is justified or not Carole T. Diffey in "Such large discourse" stresses, as does Berkeley, the essential nobility of Hamlet. His delay is not really delay; rather it is the necessary accommodation of Godlike reason before embarking upon irreversible action, something that neither the hot-headed Laertes nor the irresponsible Fortinbras are capable of doing. Restraint is a virtue in a prince, not a flaw.

The third article, by Rachel V. Billigheimer, shifts our attention to the stage-Hamlets of the eighteenth century and provides answers to such interesting questions as to why the France of this period was unsympathetic to both the play and the character whereas Germany in the same century saw itself reflected in both.

And, finally, David L. Pollard ("Belatedness in *Hamlet*") suggests a coincidence between the world-weariness of Hamlet and that of the age itself at its *fin de siecle*, an attitude captured in Donne's line, "mankind decays so soon. We're scarse our Fathers shadows cast at noone." And, yet, it is precisely because Hamlet succeeds in shaking off the ennui of the age by remembering what is past that he is finally able to achieve for himself "a distinctive heroic destiny."

* * *

We are glad to announce that this year (1990) we hope to eliminate the time lag of one year that has dogged *Hamlet Studies* for the last seven years. The next volume, 12 (1990), nos. 1 and 2, double issue, will also be published this year, that is, in August/September 1990.

R.W.D.

Claudius the Villein King of Denmark

DAVID SHELLEY BERKELEY

In the plays of Shakespeare, there are, genetically speaking, only two classes of men, gentles and base, the latter not possessing coats of arms. Criticism, clamped in the vise of democratic obliviousness to blood-based class distinctions, has not noticed that Claudius by virtue of nine times being classified a "villain" or "villein," is thus intimated to be base, and therefore, being a member of the royal family, a bastard, half-brother to Hamlet's father. The idea of a villein king of Denmark, profoundly disturbing to Hamlet (and presumably to Shakespeare), is the most notorious violation of degree in the realm and must have frightful consequences until a legitimate king, qualified by having the purest blood in Denmark and by "kindly enclyning" all those beneficent qualities that attend it, is seated on the nation's throne. The idea of Queen Gertrude being married to a villein is perhaps even more disruptive of Hamlet's equanimity because it means that night after night she is becoming less consanguineous with him, in effect less his mother, as her physiological system gradually loses the thin, hot, fast-flowing, sweet-tasting red blood of Hamlet *père* (and as a result all his excellences, physical and moral) and becomes villeinized with Claudius' thick, cold, sluggish, ill-tasting, darkish blood (and therefore acquiring all his vicious and ugly qualities.)[1] The King obtruding in various ways his vile blood upon Hamlet, Gertrude, and Denmark is a subject neglected by critics who dwell exclusively on incest, chicanery, speedy remarriage, murder, and revenge, thus causing an oversimplification of *Hamlet* that renders the play more mysterious than it really is by not fully accounting for Hamlet's anger.

Much evidence that Claudius is base and bastard is inferential; some of it is direct and (in my view) indisputable; all of it, taken together, not only makes the case certain but forces Claudius' bastardy on our consciousness and requires a view of *Hamlet* in alignment with the class realities in the play. The usual view that Claudius is simply a very wicked man obfuscates understanding.

Shakespeare's class-conscious weed imagery, scattered through his other plays, implicates Claudius as a villein. In his first soliloquy Hamlet figures his

Weltschmerz thus: "'Tis an unweeded garden, / That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely."[2] Later, in Act 3, Sc. 4, ll. 151-52, in the context of urging the Queen to repent her marriage, Hamlet says, "And do not spread the compost on the weeds / To make them ranker." Weeds like "rank," fumiter, burdocks, nettles, cuckoo flowers, and darnel (*King Lear*, 4.4.3-5) are implied in Hamlet's likening Claudius to a "moor" (3.4.67). "Rank" and "gross" are words that Shakespeare elsewhere associates with the base-born, and "weeds" is a metonymy for the base as "lilies" is its antonym for the gentle in "Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds" (Sonnet 94). Royals were of course most liable to degeneracy: King Henry IV tells his suspect son, "Most subject is the fattest soil to weeds" (*II Henry IV*, 4.4.54). In *Hamlet* Claudius is a "weed," i.e., a villein; but Gertrude is a festering lily, a degenerating gentle. Villeins could not lift themselves to a higher blood-level or even in this way be helped, and Hamlet at no time in the play considers talking his uncle out of his evil courses. But Gertrude as a degenerating gentle is open to repentance and amendment of life, a state which for her can only be attained, Hamlet thinks, through voluntary celibacy in marriage, and so he addresses her with the bitter words of the closet scene.

Claudius' unprepossessing appearance, especially as contrasted with that of the godlike Hamlet *père*, suggests his peasant origins. Hamlet analogizes his father to "Hyperion," his uncle to a "satyr" (1.2.140), and later remarks the dissimilarity between the two brothers as being as gaping as that between Hercules and himself (1.2.152-53). The Ghost of the elder Hamlet compares Claudius to "garbage," itself to "a radiant angel," a remark confirming Hamlet's registry of Claudius' despicable presence as well as his lack of other kingly gifts. Hamlet brings these comparisons to a head in the closet scene where, exhibiting pictures of the two brothers, he bids his mother accept his unqualified approval of his father's visage and figure, invoking Hyperion again, Jove, Mars, and Mercury, and his unqualified loathing of his uncle projecting his repulsive exterior, "a mildewed ear," upon the public's unwilling eyes. One might suppose that this heavy emphasis upon appearance compromises Hamlet's canonical charge of incest and his moral, religious, and legal charge of regicide, fratricide, and homicide (by 3.4 onwards) by obtruding an aesthetic (and impressionistic) evaluation as being equal to these grave matters. Not so. Physical perfection and imperfection has in the Shakespearean plays an ethical dimension. Tarquin, for example, apprehends that his rape of Lucrece is "so vile, so base, / That it will live engraven in my face" (ll. 202-03), in effect villeinizing his features. Not only do personal misdeeds have this propensity to render their perpetrators unhandsome, but evil parents and ancestors stamp their offspring with ugliness betokening descent from dishonorable and unrighteous progenitors. *Propriissimum opus* *viventis est, generare sibi simile* was a maxim quoted in the Renaissance. In *The Tempest* Prospero warns Ferdinand and Miranda that premarital sex will cause their children to resemble "weeds," i.e., villeins: "barren hate, / Sour-eyed disdain, and discord shall bestrew / The union of your bed with weeds so loathly / That you shall hate it both" (4.1.19-22). The ungentle in the Shakespearean plays are "hard-favored" and, though sometimes very strong, yet unshapely. Claudius, "a vice of kings" (4.4.98), is in Hamlet's view unsightly to a degree. We gather no details of his face and person except that, unlike Hamlet's father, whose face was red, he is swarthy, being likened to a "Satyr" (1.2.140) and to a "moor" (3.4.67) whereas his brother is twice compared to Hyperion the sun-god (1.2.140; 3.4.56). "Could you," Hamlet says to his mother, "on this fair mountain leave to feed / And batten on this moor?" The word "moor," given Shakespeare's predilection for punning, could secondarily import a swarthy man of the coloring of Othello the Moor and a person supposed as Othello is by Iago (1.1.127; 3.3.232-33) to possess, like other colored non-Europeans (*Henry VIII*, 5.4.34-9), satyr-like genitals, a description that inflames even a highly inflammatory passage. The Shakespearean plays leave no doubt that blackness was not beautiful and "fairness" was, that blackness was deemed to be closer to the animal level, and its opposite to the godlike.

Hamlet, in short, grossly suggests that Claudius has the superficies of an animal-like churl. Of course, one finds a degenerate gentle of marked ugliness in the person of Richard of Gloucester, but he is *sui generis*, being congenitally deformed. Talbot, a "writhled shrimp" (*I Henry VI*, 2.3.23), is of unquestioned gentility in all respects except appearance. Claudius might on the basis of his "foul chere" alone be another Talbot, but Hamlet's penchant for comparing him most unfavorably with his brother suggests not degeneracy so strongly as bastard birth. Neither Hamlet nor anyone else in the play ever intimates that Claudius derogated from noble parents or an earlier nobler self: so far as we know, he is now what he always was—a base fellow. Shakespeare's plays document the idea that "Beauty breedeth beauty" (*Venus and Adonis*, 1.167) both in men and women and, further, that beauty of face and figure is acquired by inheritance from gentle forbears. Marina tells Leonine in *Pericles*, "You are well-favored, and your looks foreshow / You have a gentle heart" (4.1.86-87). Pericles, though naked and shipwrecked, impresses upon the fishermen his gentility (2.2) through his handsomeness and other qualities. Marina in Pericles, the mountain princes of *Cymbeline*, Perdita of *The Winter's Tale*, and Hermia of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are only a few of Shakespeare's gentles whose beauties are commented upon. Hamlet himself is "the rose of the fair state" and "the mold of form" (3.1.160-61). Claudius is like none of these: beauty has not bred him.

Claudius' lack of honor appears in his especially despicable murder of his brother and in the two attempts at Hamlet's death. Unlike the elder Hamlet, Claudius possesses no fighting skill or willingness to hazard his person either in the field or in hand-to-hand combat in defense of his honor or even of his own person. One cannot imagine him, like Hamlet *père* or the elder Fortinbras, risking himself without a champion in a judicial combat. Claudius calmly stomachs Laertes' insulting him in public with the imputation of villein birth— "O thou vile King" (4.5.115). When his conniving with Laertes at Hamlet's death misfires, he vilely submits in spite of the presence of friends and guards, to Hamlet's degrading coercion. Claudius for all his kingly manner is, like Hobbes, a physical coward. He has nothing from inheritance like Henry V's "blood and courage that renowned them [Henry's ancestors]" running in his veins (*Henry V*, 1.2.118-19). Claudius is exemplary of the "hedge-born swain" (*I Henry VI*, 4.1.43), congenitally possessed of "fear and cold heart," and he may well have been "got in fear" (*Coriolanus*, 1.3.36). Shakespeare's antipathy to the base, disinclined to implement their own moral decisions at the risk of their lives in hand-to-hand combat (the particular specialty and *métier* of gentlemen), is seen in *Henry V* where because of intractable source-stuff he gentles Henry's base soldiery but nowhere gives traditional credit for the victory at Agincourt to these longbow men standing behind their pointed stakes. It is seen again in *The Winter's Tale* where Shakespeare was not about to countenance gentling a villein who being near a bear that is dismembering a lord does nothing about it except to be an interested spectator or his villein father (as Porrus finally knighted in *Pandosto)* who, exempted from death by the King, thinks only of his execution when before Polixenes he might have made a credible defense of his gentle-appearing foster-daughter, Perdita.[3] Shakespeare, apart from the villein component of Henry the Fifth's expeditionary force, gentles no base, and Claudius is no exception. Claudius, lacking honor, specializes in the exercise of low animal cunning in personally spilling defenseless blood or in bidding others serve his bloody causes: he acts like a shrewd peasant because he is a shrewd peasant. He has no escutcheon.

In attempting to dissuade his mother from further copulation with base Claudius, Hamlet depicts this act as taking place "in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed, / Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love / Over a nasty sty—" (3.4.92-94). "Rank" can be as here a class-word in the Shakespearean plays. In *Hamlet*, 1.2.135-37 Hamlet so uses "rank" in alluding to Claudius and with growing portentousness to Gertrude: "'Tis an unweeded garden, / That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature / Possess it merely." In *Cymbeline*, 2.1.17 ff. Cloten indicts himself as base by saying of one who has given him offense and whom Cloten wishes to fight, "Would he had been one of my rank!" The Second Lord replies in an aside, "To have smelt like a fool"—the smell of plebeian melancholy ("fool" is a Shakespearean code-word here and in other places for a peasant). "Rank" in these quotations connotes the putrid effluvia of the base, "rank-scented many" (*Coriolanus*, 3.1.66) of whom a pungent individual is "rank Thersites" (*Troilus and Cressida*, 1.3.73), like Claudius a bastard. Phlebotomizing (ineffectual for the base) was indicated— "Who else must be let blood, who else is rank?" (*Julius Caesar*, 3.1.152). Rankness here alludes to the evil smell of Galenic melancholy resident in the blood but yet independent of the blood as it was of dirty clothing and an unwashed condition. Lanfranc and Robert Burton mention, unlike some recent writers,[4] this humoral smell. "per is engendrid anoper substance pat is sumwhat stynking, & is clepid malancoli," states Lanfranc's *Ciruge*, 202, ca. 1400 (*OED*, lb). Burton notes that "fumes. . . arise from this corrupt blood [to] disturb the mind," melancholiacs being "much troubled with wind" and proneness "to continual, sharp, and stinking belchings" (*Anatomy*, Part I, Sect. 3). In *Hamlet* as well as in other Shakespearean plays a "rank" smell imports "villainous melancholy" (*King Lear*, 1.2.147). Claudius' "demo stench" (to borrow a term from Brents Stirling)[5] implies base paternity because, as Belarius says, "Base things sire base" (*Cymbeline*, 4.2.26); the smell is not self-derived. Claudius is not a "derogated" gentle because persons of this kind, even the singular Richard III, do not give offense by coming at one down wind. It goes without saying that Shakespearean gentles unstained by degeneracy do not emit an odor regardless of their bodily exertions. The fact that Gertrude is in the marital bed with Claudius appears to implicate her in a shared onus of rankness despite her unquestioned gentility: this condition was quite possible in that through repeated intercourse with Claudius she increasingly acquires his villainous blood, as we shall see, together with its ineradicable, disgustingly plebeian smell. Hamlet strongly intensifies his apprehension of this evil odor by using "enseamed [i.e., greasy] bed," "Stewed in corruption," and "nasty sty."

Next the word "sweat." In *Antony and Cleopatra* Antony, Caesar charges, has consorted with "knaves that smell of sweat" (1.4.21). The masses in *Julius Caesar* according to Casca "threw up their sweaty nightcaps and uttered such a deal of stinking breath. . . that it had almost choked Caesar. . ." (1.2.245-48). Aristotle in *On the Generation of Animals*[6] and Galen in *On the Natural Faculties*[7] had assured Elizabethans that bodily fluids, such as perspiration, were blood-derived. Shakespearean gentles may sweat, but sweat derived from ill-smelling corrupt blood, i.e., melancholic or rank blood, implies that Claudius and increasingly Gertrude are of the villein class: their marriage bed is greasy, "stewed in corruption," and sty-like. It is interesting to note that despite a presumed lifetime of dieting on the high fare of the King's table—there was a hierarchy of foods—Claudius, like Cloten, has not been able to alter his humoral condition for the better.

After meeting the Ghost of his father, Hamlet says of Claudius, "O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain / My tables—meet it is I set it down / That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain." This remark has obvious ethic-implications as elucidated by Octavius in *Julius Caesar*, 4.1.50-51: "And some that smile, have in their hearts, I fear, / Millions of mischiefs." It has (of course) class-meaning also. Villeins were thought to be "honest," a word applied derisively, for example, by Dogberry to Verges (*Much Ado*, 3.5.41), by Leonato to Dogberry (3.5.1), and in compliment by the Old Shepherd in *The Winter's Tale* to his father (4.4.466). In short, "honest" in the Shakespearean plays may be a class-discriminant: gentles use it to imply that lower orders verbalized whatever passed through their consciousness whereas English Renaissance upper classes were taught by parents and by manuals on gentlemanly conduct not to reveal all their purposes in speech and writing even to supposed friends. Villeins were, therefore, deemed artless, unsophisticated, and naive. Hamlet here means that even a vile person pursuing his villeinous courses can endeavor to mask them by smiling—a piece of behavior rare enough to deserve memorializing in a daybook. Hamlet later damns Claudius, again in soliloquy, as "Bloody, bawdy villain. / Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain" (2.2.608-09), a class-reflection, of course, villeins being the original perpetrators of villeiny. "Remorseless," "treacherous," "lecherous," and "kindless" imply the villeinous trait of not having much love for one's family members, certainly understandable on the assumption that a family of base persons was not necessarily closely related to one another. Hamlet rhetorically asks, "Who calls me villain?" (2.3.599), a question in which the ethical and the class-meanings are found—Hamlet is a prince, and to a prince the class-meaning was far more damning because it signified that a prince is not a prince at all. Accordingly the only time Prince Hal offers physical violence to Falstaff occurs when Falstaff likens his father to a singing man of Windsor (*II Henry IV*, 2.1.97-98).[8] In 3.3.76-78 Hamlet soliloquizes, "A villain kills my father, and for that / I, his sole son, do this same villain send / To Heaven." In the second line "villain" is heavy with its class-sense, Hamlet overlooking Claudius' evil deed by virtue of his making his peace with God, and Hamlet viewing Claudius as a member of the Christian Heaven though still bearing his earthly class-stigma.

Hamlet later puts whatever may be doubtful concerning Claudius' villeiny out of doubt by branding his uncle, after a markedly class-conscious description, "A murderer and a villain / A slave that is not the twentieth part the tithe / Of your precedent lord, a vice of kings" (3.4.96-98). If one takes *villain* as "a very wicked man," as critics of *Hamlet* do, then Hamlet is saying, jejunely, that Claudius is "a murderer and a very wicked man." But Hamlet is really saying "a murderer and a bastard" because "villain" (*OED*, 1, "a low-born base-minded rustic) and "villein" (*OED*, 1, "one of the class of serfs in the feudal system"), then interchangeable words and identical in pronunciation, both denoted base, therefore bastard birth. It is a progression in obloquy from "murderer." C.S. Lewis writes: "We call the enemy not what we think he is but what we think he would like least to be called. Hence extreme hatred [Lewis has just instanced Hamlet's 'shadow-passes of a soliloquized combat'] may select the word *villain* precisely because it is not yet merely moral but still carries [in *Hamlet, As You Like It,* and *Lear*] some implication of ignoble birth, coarse manners, and ignorance."[9] Lewis analogizes Hamlet's use of "villain" in application to Claudius to Somerset's insulting the *de jure* Duke of York: "Away! . . . We grace the yeoman by conversing with him" (*Henry VI*, Part I, 2.4.81). What Lewis does not notice is that Hamlet, unlike Somerset, never *vis-à-vis* brands Claudius "villain." The insult loses all potency in soliloquies, where it almost always appears. It is therefore descriptive and objurgatory, not objurgatory only. To be stigmatized a villain (class sense) is for all but a few men like Henry VI to endure a scorn far more scathing, more scalding, and more shameful than to be called a villain (ethical sense). A villain (class sense, i.e., a villein), is to be a base bastard without bar sinister because such a person has a base father and therefore no coat of arms (therefore unlike the Bastard in *King John,* whose father is Richard the Lion-Hearted). To be a villain (class sense), places horns on the putative father's forehead, impeaches the chastity of the mother, and intimates that the villain's brothers and sisters may be only half-brothers and half-sisters, and on this account little love and no honor may be found in the family. To be a villain, ethical sense, says nothing about the chastity of one's mother and does not necessarily *faire cocu* one's legal father. A villain (class sense), being a base bastard, cannot mend his case; a villain (ethical sense), may repent his villainy and become ethically a good man or attain, religiously, a state of grace, movement in either direction or in both removing the reproach of "villain."

A base bastard, of course, may be a candidate for life with Christ and the saints, but whatever his spiritual state, his blood is always vile, and he remains a base bastard. To be called a villain (ethical sense), is not in the highest degree vituperative because the person so described may impute his villainy to necessity, to some external pressure, as evil men have traditionally done. For Claudius or any other king to be branded a villain (class sense), is to impugn his legitimacy and in effect to demand his abdication. For Hamlet nine times to damn his uncle a villain in the ethical sense is merely to throw garbage on his name—Hamlet never directly calls Claudius "villain" to his face—

inasmuch as kings have seldom been angels and have often employed arbitrary and indeed evil methods that have caused at least some of their subjects to think them villains. For Hamlet nine times to brand Claudius villain in the class sense is nine times to impugn his blood as base. "Villain" (class sense), is the richest, most stinging, most unsheddable curse that can be offered a king in Shakespeare's rich vocabulary of swearing. Hamlet's extreme indignation against Claudius, partly founded on his knowledge that he, a true-born son of a true-born father, must yield the throne of Denmark to a bastard villein cannot be reconciled with the reiteration of the relatively waterish "villain" (ethical sense).

In any case, neither word could, as I have observed, in 1600 be used in chemical purity: *villain* denoted "villein," and *villein* denoted "villain." Hamlet is therefore saying that Claudius is a base bastard, and Claudius employs methods appropriate to a base bastard. Those who doubt or deny Claudius' bastardy have the impossible task of demonstrating that Hamlet's nine uses of "villain" are completely empty of class-meaning. A "Slave" who is less that a twentieth part of the elder Hamlet (3.4.97) quantifies the social gamut between the dead king and an especially vile villein, Claudius. Gertude, whom Hamlet accuses of knowingly marrying a villein, hears these class-insults without reproach or dispute. Hamlet and the Ghost are not the only characters to smell baseness in Claudius. Laertes rushes in and shouts in the presence of the Queen "O thou vile King." That Laertes could be made king suggests that Claudius' vileness was well known in Denmark. "Vile" was in Shakespeare's time a class-adjective meaning "villeinous," with which word in its nounal form, "villein," Elizabethans probably thought it was connected as they made "base" and "bastard" synonymous (cf. *King Lear*, 1.2.66ff.).[10] Laertes adds point to this stunning vituperative oxymoron climbing to the height of lese-majesty, sharpened by his publicly "thouing" the King, by ostentatiously calling attention to his anger as a certain sign of being the true son of his father. The King and Queen make no remonstrance at the insult direct and take no notice of the innuendo. The King obviously lacks choler, a gentlemanly humour, as well as blood. No one in the play calls Claudius "gentle King" or its equivalent although Laertes is called "gentleman" (4.5.148), Hamlet is called "gentle" (3.4.122), Rosencrantz and Guidenstern are called "gentle" (2.2.33-34), and Hamlet even calls the actors "Gentlemen" (2.2.387). In the stage-direction of the dumb show appears tne notice, "Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the KING's ear, and leaves him. . . ." The word "fellow" in this sentence is a class word (OED 10c "contemptuously. A person of no esteem or worth") meaning a base person, and Shakespeare in his own language applies it to the character representing Claudius in *The Murder of Gonzago*.

When Shakespeare wishes to make a point of a child's legitimacy, he invokes the Renaissance maxim of *simili generare a simile,* causing remark of children's printing off their fathers, of which the most egregious example is Banquo's hirsute line of descendants. Of one in the show of Kings, Macbeth says, "Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo. Down! / . . . And thy hair, / . . . is like the first. / A third is like the former" (4.1.111-15). In *Richard III* Richard, trying to brand his brother Edward IV with the name of bastard, speaks of Edward's lineaments as "Being nothing like the noble Duke my father" (3.5.92). In *Richard II* the old Duchess of York, having heard her son Aumerle damned as a "villain" by her husband, expostulates, "Is he not like thee? Is he not thine own" (5.2.79). In *The Winter's Tale* Paulina berates Leontes, who is convinced that the infant Perdita is a bastard (2.3.97-103):

> Behold, my lords,
> Although the print be little, the whole matter
> And copy of the father—eye, nose, lip,
> The trick of 's frown, his forehead, nay, the valley,
> The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek,
> His smiles,
> The very mold and frame of hand, nail, finger.

Obviously Claudius and Hamlet *père* could not both resemble their father. If we believe Hamlet—we have no other choice—Hamlet *père* must resemble his father, and Claudius, who differs *toto caelo* from the elder Hamlet, must resemble someone else. Claudius is therefore a bastard. Doubting or denying this interpretation causes one to ignore these non-resemblances or to explain them away as being merely picturesque or curious. Being a bastard, Claudius' ruling passion is envy of his legitimate brother: as Bacon wrote, ". . . bastards are envious, for he that cannot possibly mend his own case will do what he can to impair another's" *(Of Envy).* Claudius desperately attempts to legitimize himself—who would dare to call the King a bastard?—by his "juice of cursed hebenon in a vial."

The implications of Claudius' bastardy are portentous. The gravamen lies upon Hamlet's paternal grandmother, unmentioned in the play. This queen's obliquity is not mentioned by Hamlet because his and his father's legitimacy might be impugned by acknowledgement of a mother's and grandmother's adultery. The situation is similar to that of Richard of Gloucester, who, trying to implicate his brother, Edward IV, in bastardy so as to illegitimate Edward's sons, says to Buckingham, "But touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off, / Because you know, my lord, my mother lives" (*Richard III,* 3.5.93-94). Richard means that this allegation could place his boar escutcheon in gravest jeopardy. So Hamlet generalizes his grandmother's weakness: when Ophelia says of the prologue of the play, "'Tis brief, my lord," he replies, "As woman's love" (3.2.164). The antecedent action appears to be this: Hamlet's grandmother, after giving birth to Hamlet's father, who was of course a true son of Hamlet's grandfather on the spear side, formed an adulterous alliance with a man of the villein class, and their child was Claudius, half-brother to Hamlet *père*. The word "villein" as applied to Claudius together with the Ghost's designation of Claudius as "brother" admits no other explanation since, as with Shakespeare himself, born a villein, the father, not the mother, determines class-status.

This *Sitz in Leben* explains Hamlet's first speech in the play, "A little more than kin and less than kind," a remark that has baffled critics. "More than kin" refers to Hamlet having a blood-connection, as well as an affinity, with Claudius through the paternal grandmother (as well as being both nephew and stepson). "Less than kind" is an example of OED, 12 ("the family, ancestral race, or stock from which one springs") implying that Claudius did not derive from Hamlet's "gentle kind" (*Pericles*, 5.1.68), the father's blood, I repeat, determining class. Hamlet's lack of respect for Claudius, even though both have the same female relative as grandmother and mother respectively, is largely based on his class-conscious and family-conscious belief that the son of a low-born man, a villein, is seated on Denmark's throme in Hamlet's place and, possibly worse from Hamlet's point of view, is nightly pouring his villeinous semen into Hamlet's mother the Queen and thus gradually debasing her as she loses the excellent blood of Hamlet's father. Claudius' semen (as was conventionally and medically thought of semen in the period) was white-hot blood, which, being infused into Gertrude and thereby cooled, would have become blood mingled with her blood. Thus Eucharius Roesslin in *The Byrthe of Mankynde:* ". . . the sparme or sede of man or woman, being attracted by the foresaid seed bringers into the stones, passeth by many narrow straygthes, which being before vayne blond and antere bloud, by vertue of the places through which it had to passe, bacommeth from red colour to whyte."[11] Thus also Jacques ferrand and in *Erotomania; or a Treatise of Love:* "The seed is nothing else but Blood, made white by the Naturall Heat."[12] Claudius and Gertrude are, to quote the language of the marriage rite of the Prayer Book of the Church of England, "one flesh"; and they are, therefore, from an Elizabethan point of view, one blood.

The consequences of Claudius' bastardy need assessing. Incest is a much more *public* infamy of Gertrude and Claudius—everyone knows it—than the hush-hush matter of base blood in the royal family. Further, the fact of incest is compatible with the allegation of baseness because traditionally the marriages of half-brothers and half-sisters have been regarded as incestuous.

It is mentioned several times, but the Ghost does not dwell on incest as it does on murder and Gertrude's tasteless susceptibility to Claudius' sexual overtures, nor does Hamlet make incest the subject of a tirade either in soliloquy or with his mother. Hamlet's keen invective is given fullest exercise in the closet scene as he castigates his mother's vast and undiscriminating obtuseness in failing to perceive differences between Claudius and the elder Hamlet and in a powerful dissuasive against Gertrude's further practice of sexual intercourse with her husband. Hamlet's fury against his mother derives some of its force from his view that she is at or near the point of no return to gentility: one does not lecture peasants for being possessed of bad blood. His point of view is not based on traditional morality as the charge of incest and the charge of murder are. For Hamlet to harp heavily on incest would weaken his implied argument against mixing good blood and base blood.

Hamlet's foisting his taste upon his mother in the choice of husbands has been somewhat inexplicable to critics, but on bastardy and class grounds it is perfectly understandable (if not agreeable). Hamlet has his reasons: no one knows what iniquity, what dishonor, what ineptitude, and what foolishness lie in the sanguinary background of Claudius' father, all of which has been transmitted to Claudius, and thence to Gertrude. Gertrude, willingly permitting herself to be debased by Claudius' blood contrasts—I think this matter highly significant—with Shakespeare's excising from Lodge's *Rosalynde* base Adam's offer of his life-blood to the gentle but greatly fatigued Rosader (Orlando): "... I will presently cut my veynes, & master with the warme bloud relieve your fainting spirits: sucke on that till I ende, and you will be comforted." Hamlet's disgust at Gertrude is somewhat similar to that of Polixenes in *The Winter's Tale* who, though theoretically favoring cross-class marriages, is flatly opposed to permitting his son and heir, Florizel, to marry the supposedly low-born Perdita. Hamlet's aversion to Claudius is somewhat similar to Imogen's aversion in *Cymbeline* to having her blood debased by marriage to Cloten, who gives strong appearance of having a base father, and who wants by such a marriage to help legitimize himself as King of Britain. Hamlet's sharp language to his mother is an indictment—he is thinking not only of Gertrude and Ophelia but of his paternal grandmother—of all women as being receptive to fornication and adultery without regard to the dissolution they bring to gentle families. Another consequence is Hamlet's insulting treatment of Ophelia who according to Shakespeare's text (as distinct from actors' "business,") has done and said nothing of her own accord against Hamlet, yet must become a repository of Hamlet's odium against womankind. Another consequence is Claudius' poltroonish performance during the rapier scene. Hamlet, though fatally poisoned by Laertes' rapier, has by the strength of his superior blood, to some degree resistant to toxins,[11] run Laertes' weapon now diluted with Hamlet's pure blood not only through Laertes (who having less pure blood dies first) but also through the unwounded, unfatigued, and guarded Claudius. Hamlet forces the King to drink off the poisoned wine (which earlier had killed Gertrude) as if he were medicining a dog, an act that is finely symbolic not only of Claudius' animal-like appearance and subhuman inner qualities but also of wine as blood: wine, virtually sanguified in period understanding,[14] here symbolizes that Claudius is obliged to drink his own poisonous blood now that it has killed the Queen. The King could have drawn his own rapier to protect himself, he could have commanded his guards to kill Hamlet, he could have at least clamped his jaws against the poison—a gentleman would have done any of these things. Claudius behaves like the phlegmatic coward (with melancholy, phlegm was a base humor) that he is and that his descent has made him to be. He does not know the meaning of the word "honor." He falls by his illegitimacy; Hamlet rises by his legitimacy.

Failure to grasp the familial situation lying in the antecedent action of Hamlet derives from failure to think in terms of Renaissance class-consciousness or unwillingness to suppose that the incomparable Shakespeare, analyst of the human heart, could have been so crass as to have distinguished human beings along class-lines, gentle and base, that now have fallen in our altered world below the level of general visibility. Moderns, both critics and common readers, use "villain" in the sense of OED, 1d "That character in a play, novel, etc., whose evil motives or actions form an important element in the plot," or simply as an evil person. In this way they approach Claudius, but for Shakespeare it was otherwise. The ending of *Hamlet* is another exhibition of natural hierarchy. Shakespeare's plays teach that all is well with the world when the best blood is enthroned, when gentles are properly placed, when the base (amongst whom also there were degrees) are carrying on their often-mechanically oriented occupations, and that the world is out of joint when these happy conditions do not prevail.

NOTES

1. For a fuller account of Renaissance understanding of genetics and physiology in relation to Shakespeare's characterization, see David Shelley Berkeley, *Blood Will Tell in Shakespeare's Plays*, Graduate Studies Texas Tech University, No. 28 (Lubbock: Texas Tech Univ. Press, 1984).

2. Shakespearean quotations in this paper follow the text and lineation of *Shakespeare's Major Plays and the Sonnets*, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1948).

3. David Shelley Berkeley and Zahra Karimipour, "Blood-Consciousness as a Theme in *The*

028013

Winter's Tale," EIRC, 11 (1985), 89-98.

4. Laurence Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951) and Bridget Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971) do not treat the smell of melancholy.

5. *The Populace in Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1949).

6. Trans. J. A. Smith, *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English,* ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908-1952), Vol. 5, II, v.

7. Trans. A. J. Brock (London: Heinemann, 1916), p. 317.

8. Cf. Ernest Brennecke, "Shakespeare's 'Singing Man of Windsor,'" *PMLA,* 66 (1951), 1188-92.

9. C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1960), p. 122.

10. "The like is reported of William Langespe, base son of King Henry II., and Earl of Salisbury . . ."—John Trapp, *A Commentary or Exposition Upon All the Books of the New Testament* (1647), ed. W. Webster (1865; rpt. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 542.

11. Trans. R. Jonas (London, 1598), Capit. IX, "Of the Sede Bringers."

12. (Oxford, 1649), p. 261.

13. Cf. Trapp, p. 487: "No more ["and felt no harm"] Queen Elizabeth, when Squier, the traitor, sent by Walpool the Jesuit, had poisoned the pummel of her saddle. The vigour of the poison (said the Jesuit) is such, as neither continuance of times nor subtilty of air could check or unvirtuate. And yet, albeit the season were hot, and the veins open to receive any malign tainture, her body thereupon felt no distemperature, nor her hand felt no more hurt (saith Speed) than Paul's did when he shook off the viper into the fire."

14. Tobias Whitaker, *The Tree of Humane Life, or the Bloud of the Grape* (London, 1638), p. 30: "wine, especially Claret or red, is sanguified before it is taken."

"Such large discourse": the Role of "Godlike reason" in *Hamlet*

CAROLE T. DIFFEY

If Shakespeare was "not of an age, but for all time!" it would still be true to say that each age has had its favourite among the tragedies and that *Lear* has probably taken the place of *Hamlet* as the play with most meaning for us today. The reason for this would seem to be Lear's direct examination of man's nature in the light of the worst of which man is capable in his treatment of his fellow-men. But this in itself reflects what has been felt to be a broader difference between the two plays: namely the apparent absence from *Hamlet* of any comparable theme of general significance—what Hamlet himself calls "some necessary question of the play" (3.2.41-42);[1] the extent to which interest is felt to focus instead, more than in any of the other tragedies with the possible exception of *Othello*, upon the personality of the hero. Attitudes to that hero have undergone occasional change. L.C. Knights, for instance, ventured to detect immaturity where Dover Wilson, true to what Knights has called "the Romantic estimate," found only "the most adorable of heroes."[2] But this still begs the question as to whether this is all or even primarily what the play is about.

One of the few attempts to lift the play out of the narrow framework of a personality study—almost, in some instances, a personality cult—and to arrive at the "consistent interpretation" which Knights claims the play has always resisted[3] is Bertram Joseph's *Conscience and the King;*[4] and although one might feel that Joseph takes *Hamlet* out of a narrowly modern context only to replace it in one that is in turn too strictly confined to the Elizabethan age, it was certainly a step in the right direction, if for no other reason than that it makes better sense of the play.

Joseph begins by taking issue with those critics who see abnormality (other than, one might add, the abnormality of moral and emotional sensitivity in a world in which these are not conspicuous) in Hamlet's disgust at his mother's over-hasty and, by the standards of the age, undeniably incestuous re-marriage; and he disposes of the hardy annual of Hamlet's motive for delay by attributing his hesitation not to melancholy, which in any case he argues had a very different meaning for Elizabethans than its equivalent today, but to uncertainty about the Ghost's identity, an uncertainty which is in line with teaching about apparitions current among Catholics and Protestants alike. It is in order to free himself from these doubts, Joseph concludes, that Hamlet presents *The Murder of Gonzago*, which "is not the prevarication which some commentators have considered it to be" but "a sensible way out of the dilemma," and one sanctioned by Thomas Heywood in his *Apology for Actors* (1612).[5]

So far so good. And Anne Barton, in her more recent introduction to the New Penguin edition, seems to agree with a great deal of what Joseph has to say.[6] And yet Joseph still argues that Hamlet is wrong to delay. At the close of Chapter iv, 'The Prince and the Tragedy,' he concludes that, though "not flawed in the sense in which Aristotle is often interpreted," Hamlet is nevertheless led into error over the first appearance of the Ghost by "paying heed to an unjustifiably tender conscience"—listening, that is, according to a distinction Joseph argues would have been familiar to the Elizabethans, to scruple rather than conscience:

> But everything turns on the first mistake, the delay because of what seemed a justifiable warning from conscience. Had the Ghost been false, Hamlet might have congratulated himself upon his prudence: but in the event he can only despise himself for an unnecessary doubting of the apparition, and for paying heed to an unjustifiably tender conscience. Elizabethans would have described him as having scruples, which meant, in their sense of the word, not that he had humanitarian or moral compunction over killing Claudius, but that he gave ear to a doubt, a fear, a tenderness of conscience that the really wise man ignores. (p. 128)

Accordingly, Joseph adds, "To a large extent the tragedy depends upon Shakespeare's understanding of the difference between conscience and scruple in the Elizabethan sense."

But there is surely a flaw in Joseph's reasoning here—a flaw contained in that assertion that "Had the Ghost been false, Hamlet might have congratulated himself upon his prudence: but in the event he can only despise himself for an unnecessary doubting of the apparition, and for paying heed to an unjustifiably tender conscience"; for to suggest that an action is to be judged by its results is to rest morality upon notoriously shaky grounds. And when Joseph goes on to argue that "Had he accepted the risk, the implication is, whatever might have happened, his obedience to the Ghost would not have meant the damnation that he is afraid of encompassing," he is just as surely wrong: for it surely would have meant precisely this, even if the Ghost eventually turned out to be true. Then there is the weight of all that evidence Joseph himself assembles on the Elizabethan attitude to apparitions to suggest that Hamlet could not have been other than wrong to "take the ghost's word" (3.2.280-281), unsupported by other evidence. And finally, although Joseph is undoubtedly right to urge that religious thinkers were very much aware of and in the habit of warning against the dangers of an over-scrupulous conscience (and he need not have turned back to the Elizabethans to hear such warnings—he would find them repeated in Roman Catholic training for the confessional even today), what is at stake here involves far more than even a venial offence. It is doubtful whether it is possible to be over-scrupulous where the taking of life, let alone that of a king and a kinsman, is involved. All in all, there is every reason to suppose that Hamlet was right, not wrong, to hesitate here.

And this is what the whole matter turns on after all. For Joseph still seems in the final outcome to be trapped in the conventional notion that Hamlet is wrong to delay. And this is where I differ from him. For I would suggest that if we turn to the play itself, it will be to find not only that Hamlet was right to hesitate as he did until he had irrefutable evidence on which to act, but that this enables Shakespeare to resolve one of the most persistent problems in the moral life: namely, how far it is possible to reconcile conscience with action; not only this but to go further and show that a conscience that is scrupulous in the best modern sense of the word does not in fact inhibit action but forms the basis for the most effective, vigorous and successful action—that "perfect conscience" (5.2.67) is the pre-condition for perfect action in fact. To see whether or not *Hamlet* can be understood in these terms, however, we must now turn to the play itself.

The opening scene certainly bears out Joseph's contention as to the doubts occasioned by the appearance of the Ghost— "this thing" (1.1.21), as Horatio calls it. These doubts come to a head when they notice how, at cock crow, "it started like a guilty thing / Upon a fearful summons" (ll.148-149), and they pave the way for Hamlet's misgivings later on. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" (1.4.39) he exclaims when he first sees the apparition, and, although, when Horatio and Marcellus re-enter in search of him, Hamlet in the heat of the moment assures them that "It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you," the fact remains that, on the Ghost's own evidence, there were no witnesses to the murder; and Hamlet has no chance to test the truth of its accusation until the arrival of the players presents him with an opportunity which he, as quick-witted as his uncle (and they are not blood-relations for nothing) is farsighted enough to use.

The interest Hamlet takes in the players and their predicament shows, like other things in the play, both the range of his interests—in this respect such a contrast to Claudius's (which seem to be confined to "heavy-headed revel" 1.4.17, and what goes with it)—and the self-control which enables him to turn his attention to other things, and other people, despite his own problems. Like other things, these are the behaviour, and the talents, of a true prince—(that rare phenomenon, a prince by nature as well as by accident of birth). But his choice of a speech for the player obviously has a more personal bearing—his request to hear "Aeneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter" (2.2.440-442)—even more so when, after Polonius's objection, he continues, "Say on; come to Hecuba." Even here, we note, Hamlet's personal interest in the subject-matter does not blunt his critical attention: he can still object to the phrase "mobled queen" and, despite the effect the speech has on him, he can still turn his attention to the comfort of the players before indulging his own reactions to the speech. Far from betraying any lack of self-control, what is remarkable is the restraint that Hamlet, unlike Laertes, is able to summon up in public. It is not until he is left to himself that that command, which is another of the hall-marks of the true prince, gives way and "he breaks out into" what Coleridge called "a delirium of rage against himself."[7]

Even then it is not so much his delay in taking revenge that makes him so angry with himself as his failure to command the eloquence that the player can summon up "But in a fiction, in a dream of passion" (2.2.545). For this, he is convinced, would be sufficient of itself to accomplish his purpose and prove whether or not the Ghost is speaking the truth. It would, as he puts it, "Make mad the guilty, and appal the free." In other words, if he could speak with the same authority as the player, it would render the staging of Gonzago unnecessary. But then, as he works himself up into a frenzy worthy of Laertes—with the all-important difference that Hamlet's outburst is not taking place in public—this is followed, very naturally, by even greater disgust at himself for carrying on like this when alone, when it is ineffectual and no better than the ranting of "a whore," "A scullion!" It is a meaningful self-reproach from a man, a prince, who, as he shows in his later tribute to Horatio (3.2.63-72), values self-control, along with patience and long-suffering, above all things. And then this in its turn is followed by the account of the plan which is to solve his problem for him by leading the accused, if guilty, to betray himself—the staging of *Gonzago:* "I have heard / That guilty creatures, sitting at a play. . . ." (2.2.584-601).

And the plan works, or works in part. For the King, who has sat silent, perhaps inattentive, through the dumb-show, but whose nerves have been set on edge by the Player King's speech, realizes, when he sees Lucianus pouring poison into the ears of his victim, especially when he accompanies the action with the words *"else no creature seeing,"* that Hamlet knows the truth and suddenly rises, calling for the "light" which the threat to which he has just been alerted makes necessary.

It is sufficient of a success to warrant Hamlet's exultant claim: "O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound." But it does not go so far as to fulfil his further, over-sanguine expectations: "That guilty creatures . . . have proclaim'd their malefactions." For this Claudius does not do. Instead he rises abruptly and hurries away before he can betray himself further. And the other point is that he has been alerted. In other words, the very move that frees Hamlet from the uncertainty which has restrained him so far also warns his intended victim; so that Hamlet, possessed now of the moral freedom to act, no longer has the physical liberty. But with the exception of Horatio, nobody else is in the know: the two "mighty opposites" (5.2.62) are still conducting their silent fencing match in the presence of "th' yet unknowing world" (l.371).

And this is part of the point. For it is possible that Providence has larger views than the Ghost, still motivated as it is by the personal desire for revenge. And it is also possible that Hamlet, acting correctly within the limits that inevitably circumscribe human knowledge, enables those designs to be better fulfilled. We can see this more clearly perhaps if we look at the further and slightly different instance of Hamlet's delay which occurs shortly afterwards.

This is when Hamlet chances upon Claudius at prayer when he, Hamlet, is on his way to see his mother. For although Hamlet declares himself now ripe for revenge (3.2.380-382), and although his first impulse on seeing Claudius is to kill him— "Now might I do it pat, now 'a is a-praying; / And now I'll do't" (3.3.73-74)—the reflection "and so'a goes to heaven" gives him pause and makes him withdraw his sword for reasons that Dr. Johnson found "too horrible to be read or to be uttered,"[8] namely, the contrast between Claudius's supposed fate and his brother's sufferings in the after-life, a contrast which, as Hamlet says, "would be scann'd." The irony is of course that when Claudius rises from his knees, after Hamlet's departure, it is to confess, what he foresaw would be the case when he knelt down, that he cannot pray: "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. / Words without thoughts never to heaven go." But Hamlet could not have known this, any more than he could know that the Ghost was "an honest ghost" (1.5.138) until he had found some means of testing its authenticity. And if we look at the outcome of Hamlet's delay in the present instance, we will find certain advantages arising out of what Joseph still insists on referring to as a "mistake."[9]

In the first place, Claudius is at a cross-roads. Just before Hamlet's entry we overheard that unexpected soliloquy from him—an expansion of the hint contained in his aside on hearing Polonius's sententious remark to Ophelia

(3.1.46-54), which reveals that unlike his henchmen—from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to Polonius—he has a conscience, and is therefore capable of damnation: almost alone in the play, oddly enough, his mind runs along the same lines as Hamlet's. Thus the play within the play also has the effect of bringing Claudius as close as he can come to repentance, though only so that he can end trapped, like Faustus, in an insoluble dilemma, a soul struggling, as he so accurately puts it, in lime— "Try what repentance can. What can it not? / Yet what can it when one can not repent?"—and only able to fall back on the platitude in which all moral inadequacy seeks consolation: "All may be well."

Claudius is given a second chance, and it brings him to this. But this is not all. His death, when it does occur, takes place on the most public of stages—not a surreptitious act of vengeance, which would have plunged the kingdom, of which Hamlet is prince, into confusion, but a public act, warranted by other testimony than the accusation of Hamlet alone, by Laertes's cry: "The King, the King's to blame" (5.2.312). There will therefore be weighty testimony to support Horatio's account when he obeys Hamlet's injunction to "speak to th' yet unknowing world / How these things came about" (ll.371-372). And even this is not all. The most important advantage to be gained from Hamlet's further delay at this point—and for that matter up to this point too—is the effect of his subsequent interview on the Queen.

For the Gertrude who opens with the supremely tactless remark, "Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended" (3.4.9), is very different from the Gertrude of the end of the scene; and it is Hamlet who brings about the change when, after the death of Polonius, he turns to the Queen, telling her, "Peace, sit you down, / And let me wring your heart. . . / If damned custom have not braz'd it so / That it be proof and bulwark against sense," as seemed all too likely. But this is exactly what he does manage to do, so that, by delaying as he did, the Queen is saved: her conscience is awakened, albeit by the crudest means—Hamlet has to work on her first by forcing her to acknowledge the physical difference between her two husbands—and she does come wholly over to Hamlet's side. The Gertrude who dies drinking to Hamlet's success is a Gertrude who, having recognized the error of her ways, will no longer merit damnation for the sin of incest but now, one assumes, can join her first husband in purgatory rather than her second one in hell. The Gertrude who dies is in fact a Gertrude who has been saved and who owes her salvation, most touchingly, to her son.

These are some of the advantages to be gained from Hamlet's delay, and to them we might add another, namely, the gradual eradication of all the other sources of corruption, or even moral inadequacy—from Polonius to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Gertrude herself and even Ophelia who, though by no means so culpable (and the manner of her death is for this reason wonderfully appropriate) yet damns herself by the outright lie into which she allows herself to be panicked in the interview with Hamlet, when Hamlet asks, "Where's your father?" and Ophelia replies, "At home, my lord" (3.1.130-131). But apart from this, there are two clear parallels to indicate that Hamlet was right, not wrong, to take the course that he did. The most obvious is of course that between Hamlet and Laertes. But before we come to this, we have Hamlet's significant encounter with the captain of Fortinbras's army, on its march across Denmark to attack the Poles.

The parallels between Fortinbras's and Hamlet's positions are made clear from the start, in Horatio's account of the situation in Norway in Act 1, scene 1. There too a king has died, and a brother rather than a son has succeeded to the throne (and incidentally nobody seems to think there is anything unusual in this)—though there is of course no suggestion of foul play, nor of an incestuous marriage (and indeed, if Claudius's contemptuous reference is anything to go by, 1.2.29, the Norwegian king would scarcely be capable of so active a role). But the more significant parallel comes in Act 4, scene 4, where Hamlet, on his way to join the ship for England, sees Fortinbras's army on the march and questions the Captain closely, as becomes a prince and one with the makings of a soldier, about its objective.

The questions Hamlet puts to the Captain are direct and practical and show that he is neither too distraught nor too self-centred to be incapable of interesting himself in other matters, notably the affairs of state. But the exchange has more to it than this. Matters come to a head in Hamlet's final question as to the aim of the expedition— "Goes it against the main of Poland, sir, / Or for some frontier?" (4.4.15-16)—and the Captain's frank reply: "To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it." Hamlet's immediate reaction to this is to exclaim, "Why, then the Polack never will defend it"; but the Captain assures him, "Yes, it is already garrison'd," at which Hamlet protests: "Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats / Will not debate the question of this straw."

It is only after this initial, spontaneous outburst that Hamlet changes his mind and comes to see in the Polish reaction, as in the Player's speech on Hecuba, a living reproach to him for his inactivity— "How all occasions do inform against me, / And spur my dull revenge!"—and evidence of his own cowardice, of that "craven scruple / Of thinking too precisely on th' event" which Joseph has identified with an over-scrupulous conscience and which now leads Hamlet to contrast himself unfavourably to Fortinbras, "Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd, / Makes mouths at the invisible event."

The debate has been updated by the events of 1982 in the Falklands; but that is not to say that Hamlet was wrong in his original reaction--or right to reproach himself here. One thing that it does mean is that Hamlet is in the classic dilemma for a Christian prince, torn between the rival claims of honour and the different considerations introduced by Christianity. But we do not need to remind ourselves of Shakespeare's persistent questioning of the concept of honour to recognize that Hamlet's original reaction has a weight of its own; or to realize that it might well be Fortinbras rather than Hamlet who is failing to live up to Hamlet's description of man shortly before, when he asked: "What is a man, / If his chief good and market of his time / Be but to sleep and feed?" It may well be Fortinbras rather than Hamlet who is failing to use that same "godlike reason," given us to look "before and after." The point becomes clearer when we move straight on to the next parallel and contrast—that between Hamlet and Laertes.

The contrast between Hamlet and Laertes is deliberately sustained. When Laertes bursts in (in Act 4, scene 5) bringing disorder with him, and extracts from Claudius the admission that Polonius is "Dead," he responds with a declaration which sets him on a moral collision course with Hamlet: "How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with. / To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!" The contrast is clinched later when Claudius asks him, "what would you undertake / To show yourself in deed your father's son / More than in words?" and Laertes comes back immediately with the reply: "To cut his throat i' th' church."

But by taking up this position, Laertes puts himself in the position of Banquo's murderers in *Macbeth,* who interestingly enough also reject the Christian counsel of patience (3.1.85-90) and who consequently allow themselves to be duped into seeking revenge on the wrong man—on Banquo instead of on Macbeth himself. Something similar happens in *Hamlet,* where Laertes, unlike Hamlet, is no match for Claudius's diabolical cunning. But with Laertes's outright statement the die is cast and the ground prepared for Claudius's schemes. And Laertes can even go one better than Claudius. They make a good pair. But the King still has another ploy to add to the "unbated" and "envenom'd" sword: and so he arranges to have the poisoned "chalice" ready. The scheme, or schemes, would seem to be fool-proof, but they have reckoned without the element of chance which, as the instrument of providence, is still an indication of the limits of individual human will, even of the most skilful machiavel.

Hamlet has come to something of the same recognition as a result of the events on board the ship carrying him to England. These have led him, as he tells Horatio, to the conviction that "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (5.2.10-11). And Horatio, whom we have learnt to regard as a moral touch-stone in the play, concurs wholeheartedly: "That is most certain," he agrees. And these same events have given Hamlet conclusive evidence of Claudius's treachery, putting him now in a position to ask Horatio whether it is not "perfect conscience / To quit him with this arm?" It is indeed perfect conscience. For Hamlet now has all the evidence he needs, setting aside the Ghost's word, though it needed the Ghost's revelation to set events in motion, so that we have in this a perfect example of the workings of providence, intervening but not interfering, and fulfilling itself all the better for Hamlet's delay. Now too Claudius's evil is ready to reveal itself, most against his own nature and the nature of evil itself, in public.

To Horatio's practical objection—"If must be shortly known to him from England / What is the issue of the business there (ll.71-72)—Hamlet replies with calm confidence: "It will be short; the interim is mine, / And a man's life's no more than to say 'one'." When the actual invitation to the duel arrives, Hamlet confesses his "gain-giving" to Horatio but refuses the latter's offer to intervene on the grounds that— ". . . there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow." It is the voice of mature wisdom; and it also demonstrates the perfect co-ordination between the active and the passive—those twin poles of human nature—something perhaps of what Wordsworth meant when he spoke of "The calm existence that is mine when I / Am worthy of myself."[10] And so the stage is set for the final scene, where all will take place in as public a manner as possible: as the stage direction reads, "Trumpets, Drums, and Officers . . . *Enter* KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, *and all the* State."

The King begins by behaving with exactly that same concern for appearances that characterized him in the first scene in which he appeared (1.2), by publicly joining Hamlet's and Laertes's hands. And in the arrangements he makes to have the "ordnance fire" (5.2.262) from the battlements should Hamlet score a hit, and his order for the kettledrum, trumpet and even the cannon to sound now as "the King drinks to Hamlet," we are also reminded of that "heavy-headed revel" which Hamlet objected to in an earlier conversation with Horatio (1.4.17-22). We could scarcely ask for a more complete contrast between the true prince and false king than is afforded here by the contrast between this flamboyant speech and the delicacy of Hamlet's apology to Laertes, which is both private and personal and yet fitted for the public ear; it is as complete a contrast as between Laertes's treachery and Hamlet's good faith. But most of all, and most ironically, the King's speech, like the King's behaviour throughout the play, is a public performance; and it is only fitting that he should now be inviting the public exposure from which he has been shrinking all along: "Give me the cups; / And let the kettle to the trumpet speak," the King orders, concluding by calling the heavens and earth to witness.

The King also plans to mask the poisoning of the cup, should it prove necessary, by making it as public an act as possible: "And in the cup an union shall he throw, / Richer than that which four successive kings / In Denmark's crown have worn." And from here on the action proceeds perfectly—a perfect rendering of the working out of providence through individual will. It is entirely in character for Claudius not only to plan ahead, as he does here, but to over-reach himself by acting ahead as well, as he does when Hamlet shows unexpected promise of success, by poisoning the cup: "Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine; / Here's to thy health. Give him the cup." It is equally natural for Hamlet to decline: "I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile." And it is also entirely in character, and touchingly so, for the Queen, who has now aligned herself with Hamlet, to drink to her son. And there is of course a marvellous rightness in the circumstance that it should be the Queen, who figures so largely in Hamlet's consciousness, and in that of the Ghost, at the beginning, and whose word would carry more weight than that of any other, who finally brings the matter home to the King. With the Queen in a sense it began; and with the Queen it is only right that it should end.

When Laertes and Hamlet prepare to engage for the third, final and fatal time, we over-hear Laertes confess privately, as he promises to "hit him now," "And yet it is almost against my conscience." While they are fighting, *"The Queen falls"* and when they are parted, and found to be bleeding on both sides, Hamlet reciprocates the concern his mother showed for him by immediately demanding, "How does the Queen?" Even now Claudius's first concern is for himself: "She swoons to see them bleed," he explains. But the Queen herself has breath left to denounce him: "No, no, the drink, the drink! O my dear Hamlet! / The drink, the drink! I am poison'd." And Laertes takes his cue from her: "Thy mother's poison'd. / I can no more. The King, the King's to blame." And so we finally have the *public* denunciation which Claudius has been at such pains to avoid but towards which the whole play had been tending—and which would have been prevented had Hamlet acted privately and precipitately, as so many of his critics, and for that matter the Ghost itself had wanted him to do: had he in fact acted as recklessly as Laertes, on even more slender evidence, the mere word of a Ghost; or had he even stabbed Claudius after the play scene, as the latter knelt in prayer. Yet even now we can see how necessary it was, particularly where the welfare of a whole country is at stake, that Hamlet's action should take place in as public a context as possible: that it should not carry the taint of private revenge. For when Hamlet attacks the King with the poisoned rapier, the cry from all sides is still "Treason! treason!" And even here the King makes one last desperate, characteristic and almost comic effort to survive—"O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt"—until Hamlet forces the poisoned cup between his lips in one final, determined act of vengeance.

But though there may be doubt in the minds of those present—"You that look pale and tremble at this chance, / That are but mutes or audience to this act"—there is now independent testimony against Claudius and in favour of the truth as Horatio shall report it, in Laertes's accusation— "The King, the King's to blame"—and in his subsequent comment, when he sees Hamlet force the cup between Claudius's lips: "He is justly serv'd: / It is a poison temper'd by himself." And there is also time for Laertes, like the Queen, to repent: "Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet."

There is also time for Hamlet—who, apart from other motives, is still nobleman enough to be concerned at "what a wounded name, / Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!"—to insist that Horatio go on living in order to "report me and my cause aright / To the unsatisfied" and, in an entirely characteristic way, to make arrangements for the state after his death: "But I do prophesy th' election lights / On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice." Even in dying, Hamlet, unlike Claudius, shows the practical concern for the state which is the hall-mark of the true prince. And thus too, by means of the delay, providence has scored a further victory in the bringing about of lasting peace between Denmark and Norway—the removal of that threat which was rumbling on in the background at the beginning of the play, and to which indeed Horatio and Marcellus attributed the appearance of the Ghost.

In view of all this, one would have thought that it would no longer be possible to urge that Hamlet was other than right to delay. And by that delay Hamlet shows himself to be a true Prince in the fullest sense of the word (and perhaps too Shakespeare's final answer to that other prince portrayed by Machiavelli); for in Hamlet Christian conscience finally becomes welded with that honour which had long been one of Shakespeare's concerns to prove that the two are finally and fully compatible—that the truest honour is also the finest Christian conscience, and that action and conscience can be compatible one with the other. It is for these reasons that Horatio's epitaph seems totally in place: "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince, / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!" And Fortinbras's closing tribute, though on a different plane, seems equally well merited:

> Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage;
> For he was likely, had he been put on,
> To have prov'd most royal.

It is a good political move, by one who is quick to seize on his "vantage" (I.382); but it is also a tribute that is more than justified by the action of the play as a whole.

NOTES

1. Citations from Shakespeare in my text are to *The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1951). Title quotations IV.iv.36 & 38.

2. L.C. Knights, *Explorations: Essays in Criticism Mainly on the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946), pp. 66 & 70-71.

3. *Explorations*, p. 66.

4. London: Chatto & Windus, 1953.

5. Joseph, p. 82.

6. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1980, pp. 28, 31-34 & 40).

7. *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor (London: Dent, Everyman, 1960), II, 151.

8. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven and London: Yale U.P., 1968), VIII, 990.

9. *Conscience and the King*, p. 119.

10. *The Prelude 1805*, in the Norton Critical Edition, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams and Stephen Gill (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), Bk.I, lines 349-350.

Diversity in the Hamlets of the Eighteenth-Century Stage in England, France and Germany

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In a survey of stage history we review some of the varied interpretations of the character of Hamlet as his conception is modified by the cultural environment and the spirit of the age. Turning to significant predecessors we may compare for example the widely contrasting portrayals of the hero in the classical *Oedipus Rex* and the oriental *Sakuntala*. The "tragic flaw" in the character of the hero in the Greek tragedy represents a frailty beyond his control which inevitably brings him to an ill-fated end. In Aristotle's study of Greek drama he theorizes that character is secondary in significance to the plot, which is interpreted on a cosmic rather than on an individualistic level. On the basis of a cosmic moral order the play dramatizes the role of fate in human affairs. Comparing *Oedipus Rex* to the Indian play, the most notable difference is the complete lack of a sense of tragedy and the absence of violence in the Indian *Sakuntala*. Ancient Indian drama, which emphasized the softer emotions and a reverent communion with nature, served as a device of religious instruction for the people on the conduct of life.[1]

In the earlier versions of the Hamlet story, the Scandinavian Hamlet-saga of the tenth century, the twelfth century account of Amlethus in Saxo's *Historia Danica,* the sixteenth-century *Fratricide Punished* of German origin and to a lesser degree in versions up to the time of Shakespeare, including *The Spanish Tragedy* of Kyd, the major characteristic of the drama was the well known tradition of the revenge plot. The main interest being in the story of human revenge, character was merely complementary to plot. In the following exposition we trace the major developments in the interpretation of the character of Hamlet in the eighteenth century and its precedents.

I

We first view the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare's time. Before the time of Shakespeare, drama was divided into two distinct categories, tragedy and comedy. Although Shakespeare created the tragic model of his day, he also wrote comedy as well as tragi-comedy. Shakespeare's comedy, however, in distinction to Jonson's classical tradition, was said to be vulgar. The scenes of Hamlet's feigned insanity, the "Get thee to a nunnery" scene and the Graveyard scene, scenes which we regard to-day as tragic, were by Elizabethan audiences regarded as comic. We may thus infer that Shakespeare's use of the comic in these scenes was to strengthen the force of the tragic aspect. Shakespeare's audience was capable of simultaneous response to archaic comedy and an underlying tragedy. Since Shakespeare did not have a reading public in his day, his plays, designed wholly for the theatre, produced much of their impact by images of grandeur. As we see in most of his plays, the throne of the King was the "seat" of the play. There was much display of military splendour, grand colorful processions and music. Although some of his plays deal with a mythical pre-Christian England, to the audience of Shakespeare's time, the king, enthroned by divine right, was associated with the divine hierarchy. Unlike the audiences of to-day when the playhouses are filled largely by the intellectual sections of the public, the Elizabethan audience consisted of a cross-section of society, from the bricklayer to the royal household, and each man in the audience interpreted a play according to his own understanding and outlook. Shakespeare was aware that he catered to a "motley" crowd of diverse opinions, both traditional and revolutionary in their outlook, for his plays commonly reveal a conflict between traditional values and people in high authority and the rest of society. Images and concepts of the supernatural were accordingly interpreted from the individual perspective of the spectator.

The ghost, which is the axis image in *Hamlet,* retains the tradition of the Senecan revenge ghost as well as the prologue ghost. There are as well Christian overtones in the ghost's references to his confinement in order to fast in fires as a retribution for his sins, while the personal relationship of the ghost to Hamlet and their personal discourse humanize it into one of the main characters. Regarding ghosts there were three schools of thought in Elizabethan spiritualism. Firstly there is the concept in the Papists' doctrine "that those spirits which men sometime see and hear be either good or bad angels, or also the souls of those which either live in everlasting bliss, or in purgatory, or in the place of damned persons; and that divers of them are those souls that crave aid and deliverance of men."[2] The notion of the dead as being transported to a place either of eternal bliss or of damnation gave rise to the orthodox Protestant view that, while ghosts may represent angels, it was equally possible that they might be devils that have assumed the image of departed relatives of those who behold them in order to bring them to harm.[3] The view that ghosts are apparitions of minds disposed to melancholy and that they foreshadow an ominous fate, is expressed by Horatio, who can be take as representing the scholarly opinion of the time: "But in the gross and scop of my opinion, / This bodes some strange eruption to our state" (1.1.68-9 While Horatio regards the ghost as an omen of foreboding, Hamlet at one stag of his mental anguish muses on the possibility of the ghost, an apparition his melancholic state, being in fact the devil disguised as his father's spirit order to work harm on him: "The spirit that I have seen / May be the devil (2.2.627ff).

The story of Hamlet originated in Scandinavian legend in the ten century. In the twelfth century Saxo Grammaticus wrote a series of legend *Historia Danica* in which there is no ghost in the story of Hamlet, nor in th version's translation into French by Belleforest in 1570. In Belleforest' translation into English *The Hystorie of Hamblet* which appeared in 160 there is also no ghost, but the pagan philosophical Hamlet divines that " would seem miraculus yt Hamblet shold divine in yt sort, which often prooue so true (yt as I said before) the dieul had not knowledge of things past, but grant it be knoweth things to come . . . the wicket spirit abuseth mankind, an advertiseth him, (as he can) of things past."[4] However, while it is implied th this Hamblet was versed in the arts of the devil, M.F. Egan maintains th Shakespeare's ghost, who appeals to his son with so much pathos an earnestness to have a sense of mission, has no link with the arts of the devil even though his son at one time doubts him.[5] Egan gives this interpretatio "The Ghost, to the auditors at the theatre in London, represented the State he was the anointed king demanding justice for sacrilege, providing for th peace of the kingdom, and the life even of the rightful heir."[6] Since Hamlet's continual linking of heaven, earth and hell is an expression of his skepticism the ghost fails in his mission. Hamlet however dies more happily than his father, knowing that his message will be conveyed to those who wil understand it.[7] The ghost, which may be taken to symbolize both the murde and the incest, represents both the motivation for Hamlet's action as well a the cause of his delay, in its dual character giving rise to the conflict whic is at the root of the tragedy.[8] With this interpretation we may thus, even in th view of the Elizabethan audience, regard the ghost as an integral force i Hamlet's personality.

Richard Burbage (1567-1619) played the part of Hamlet, whil Shakespeare himself acted the part of the ghost. All plays were performed i contemporary dress, though Hamlet would have been consistently in blac while the ghost was clad in steel armour. Beards being in fashion at the time Hamlet would have had a beard, also to be consistent with his words "Wh calls me villain? breaks my pate across? / Plucks off my beard, and blows i in my face?" (2.2.599-600). Swords and rapiers were part of the dress of th period. The soliloquies were delivered to the audience taken into the actor's confidence.[9] The character of the Elizabethan tragic hero, designated as baroque, has three notable features, namely a heightened sense of emotion, a quality of the fantastic or bizarre which required an extravagance or eccentricity in his personality and thirdly a self-exalting attitude. We note all these qualities as important aspects of Hamlet's character.

With the intense display of passion and emotion and the anguished moralizing characteristic of the age, which is encountered in *Hamlet* in the soliloquies, in the frequent references to murder, incest and conscience and in the scene of pondering on the meaning of life and death in the graveyard, the seventeenth-century hero, acted say by Burbage in the role of Hamlet, is a prince of vitality and great eloquence. Unlike the more finely tuned Hamlet of the following ages, the seventeenth-century Hamlet was a straightforward avenger, and not portrayed as analyzing his motives in isolation. He was a malcontent, sometimes seen to be possessed by madness either from love or from a real malady which produced a comic effect. Although the Elizabethans associated the malcontent with madness, there are also echoes of a malcontent Hamlet who seems in full possession of his faculties. This Hamlet, who is masculine and primitive, also has a melancholic aspect that is not typical of the type of graveyard melancholy which became the pattern of Hamlet portrayals of the next century. The qualities associated with this malcontentism are bitterness, sarcasm, cynicism, cruelty and obscenity.[11] In the eighteenth century the melancholy aspect of Hamlet's character was modified to blend with the more refined tastes of the age. Typical of the seventeenth century was the mingling of idea and emotion, and, in line with this characteristic of the age, much would have been made of Hamlet's sermonizing with the skull in his hand. With the Puritan influence this became a more important characteristic during the later Elizabethan period. The mad Hamlet was so appealing to Elizabethan audiences, who found the madness a laughing matter, that his madness was often portrayed more realistically than was justified by the script. Apart from the "revenge Hamlet" of the seventeenth century, Fletcher thus created a high burlesque figure of Hamlet. None of the dramatic impact of the ghost's playing upon the imagination and anguish of Hamlet was present. The basic seventeenth-century interpretation of Hamlet as a malcontent avenger given to madness, melancholy and moralizing, came to be a figure accepted as a folk-image. After the death of Burbage an elegiac poem describes Hamlet as a mad lover rushing into Ophelia's grave. The eloquent, dramatic and lively Hamlet of the seventeenth century, as acted by Burbage, made him the leading character of the Elizabethan stage.[12] A more analytic and milder Hamlet, as presented by the leading actor Betterton, was the development of the succeeding age for the Restoration audience.

As we move from the world of the seventeenth century to the mu changed spirit of the eighteenth-century stage dominated by Garrick, we fir examine the Restoration Hamlet, Thomas Betterton (1635-1710), who leading role provided a bridge between the differences of these two period He had inherited the Shakespearean tradition. His interpretation, although n marked by subtleties, moved his audience for half a century. Colley Cibbe in his *An Apology for his Life*, reports on Betterton's manner of action i rendering the Ghost an apparition of terror to the spectators:

> You have seen a Hamlet, perhaps, who, on the first appearance of h father's spirit, has thrown himself into all the straining vociferatio requisite to express rage and fury, and the house has thundered wi applause, though the misguided actor was all the while (as Shakespea terms it) tearing a passion into rags. I am the more bold to offer you th particular instance, because the late Mr. Addison, while I sat by him, t see the scene acted, made the same observation; asking me, with som surprise, if I thought Hamlet should be in so violent a passion with th Ghost, which, though it might have astonished, it had not provoked him? . . This was the light into which Betterton threw this scene; which h open'd with a pause of mute amazement! then rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectator as t himself! and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which th ghostly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was stil govern'd by decency, manly, but not braving; his voice never rising int that seeming outrage, or wild defiance of what he naturally refer'd."

Barton Booth reports, "When I acted the Ghost with Betterton, instead of my awing him, he terrified me."[14] Betterton's early performances of Hamlet were in the garb of a courtier of Charles II, later ones with streaming shoulder knots, cocked hat, and powdered wig. His interpretation is said to have been the one approved by Shakespeare himself.[15] Although Betterton's actions were restrained, he was able to produce a delineation of passion at the appropriate occasion. A. Aston, in his *Brief Supplement to Colley Cibber*, gives a telling description:

> His actions were few, but just. . . . He was better to meet than to follow for his Aspect was serious, venerable, and majestic. . . . His Voice was low and grumbling; yet he could Time it by an artful *Climax*, which enforc'd universal Attention, even from the Fops and *Orange-Girls*. . . . *Betterton*, kept his Passion under, and shew'd it most. . . . *Betterton*, from the Time he was dress'd, to the End of the Play, kept his Mind in the same

Temperament and Adaptness, as the present Character required.[16]

Steele in the *Tatler* appraises Betterton's final performance of Hamlet in 1709. Betterton's interpretation fully conforms to the contemporary Restoration image of the "hero":

> ...had you been tonight at the play-house, you had seen the force of action in perfection: your admired Mr. Betterton behaved himself as well, that, though now about seventy, he acted youth; and by the prevalent power of proper manner, gesture and voice, appeared through the whole drama a young man of great expectation, vivacity and enterprise.[17]

Betterton was able to excite the imagination of his audience with a sense of dramatic conflict in the key situations of the play, that depict the inescapable and archetypal personal crisis in every man's life journey:

> The soliloquy, where he began the celebrated sentence of "To be, or not to be;" the expostulation where he explains with his mother in her closet; the noble ardour, after seeing his father's ghost, and his generous distress for the death of Ophelia, are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasions in their own lives.[18]

Eighteenth-century acting can be divided into four schools. Twentieth-century divisions in stage presentation can be traced back to the leading actors of each of the schools of the eighteenth century. The school led by Betterton was a school of nature. Since contemporary heroic drama would not permit naturalism in acting until the revival of the earlier romantic plays, the style of Betterton, although exuding passion and energy, was restrained and grave. The second school led by the triumvirate Cibber-Booth-Wilks was characterized by exaggeration. Barton Booth, the generally accepted successor of Betterton, was famed for his talent of revealing hidden passions while still observing the rule of restraint. Macklin and Garrick, leaders of the third school, were considered more as refiners than as reformers of the previous acting principles of naturalism and restraint, and of exaggeration. Macklin's main modification was to tone down bombast and grandiloquence and to introduce broken speech as a vehicle of emotion. Garrick based his manner of tragic acting on Macklin's technique of broken tones and on the combination of passion with graceful posture characteristic of the older romantic school. At the time when romantic drama was gaining popularity, the Kemble and Siddons team emerged as leaders of the fourth school. Their style again was an adaptation of its predecessors. With its emphasis on dignity in action and rhetorical speech, it tended towards a neo-classical quality, while on the other hand the celebrated actors of heroic drama were able to cope with the popular demand for declaration as well as for the clap-trap rant so fashionable in eighteenth-century acting. Garrick's familiar yet forcible style of rant was influenced by Macklin's technique of common speech with force. Altogether it was an age of graceful and picturesque poise, with emphasis on action and emotion suggested by a ranting tone of speech. These eighteenth-century decorative gestures arose from their concept of art which was one of imitating nature.[19]

The dominant Hamlet of the eighteenth century, David Garrick, was known as "Shakespeare's Priest," although his major alterations also provoked severe criticisms. Garrick very daringly aborted the melancholic and meditative passages and garnished his speeches with tempestuous remarks and threats. The melancholic and passive aspects of Hamlet were deleted in order to portray Hamlet as a man of action, in accordance with the image of the ideal hero of the eighteenth-century stage. Garrick omitted the meditative scene of the gravediggers, Hamlet's introspective sermonizing on Yorick and the melancholic funeral of Ophelia.[20] The scenes of Osric and the fencing match were replaced by a new ending. The significant self-questioning soliloquy "How all occasions do inform against me" (Act 4 Sc. 5: 32) was, perhaps injudiciously for the comprehension of his audience, omitted. However since this soliloquy also refers to the Fortinbras episode and climaxes in a sense of renewed determination, Garrick later restored it to the play.[21] Hazelton Spencer sees Garrick's interpretation in its historical perspective ". . . Hamlet as the best ideal of active young manhood rather than a dreamsick weakling pining for the ministrations of Freud."[22] Garrick portrayed the character of Hamlet in direct contrast to the later romantic view, for example of Goethe, of Hamlet as a sensitive "beautiful flower." G. W. Stone commends Garrick's interpretation of Hamlet's character:

> He was vital, he was active; and the inner workings of his mind, and the conflicts that faced the thinker driven on by deep and active emotions were apparently presented in an unforgettable manner. Such psychological delineation was Garrick's stronghold. It was what made him stand head and shoulders above his contemporaries in the characters of Richard III and Macbeth. And all the passages which he restored to the Danish Prince were those which showed the conflicts within Hamlet's being.[23]

Garrick's representation of the hero as essentially a man of action was in accord with the tradition of his time. His interpretation, having provided a bridge between the popular theatre-goers and the literati, who had previously regarded Shakespeare as lacking in classical tradition and obscene in his cruelties, rehabilitated Shakespeare to prominence. He was succeeded by John Henderson, who differed from Garrick in his greater show of grace, in the calmness of his encounter with the ghost and in his tenderness and grief at Ophelia's funeral. He did not however achieve the stature or acclaim of Garrick. It is thus often said that the successor of Garrick was John Philip Kemble (1757-1823).[24] Kemble's great portrait of Hamlet is distinguished by its dignity and grace, although Hazlitt describes Kemble in his portrayal of Hamlet as "like a man in armor."[25] Kemble was succeeded by Kean, of whose extraordinary force and vitality Hazlitt relates, "Its extreme boldness 'bordered on the verge of all we hate,' and the effect it produced, was a test of the extraordinary powers of this extraordinary actor."[26] William Charles Macready (1793-1873), who succeeded Kean, is appraised by John Foster:

> We venture to think, without a shade of misgiving, that this performance was the noblest approach that the stage can present to Hamlet, as he exists in the wonderful creativeness of Shakespeare's fancy. Vivid delineations of moments of passion, we have seen equally fine, fragments of possibly superior beauty in the acting of the late Mr. Kean—but never such a grasp of thought, never such a sustained exhibition of single, profound, and enduring passion, cast in the yielding and varying mould of imagination. Mr. Macready was indeed the princely and heartbroken philosopher, the irresolute avenger, the friend of Horatio, the lover of Ophelia. . . . The impassioned and heart-breaking sorrow with which Mr. Macready opened the play in the first soliloquy was a noble foundation for the entire structure of the character.[27]

Edwin Forrest (1806-1872), the American contemporary and rival of Macready, had also modelled his technique on Kean. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England, conceiving the ideal image of the tragic hero as a character of vitality, grace, emotion, sensibility and action, saw Hamlet as a man of promise and expectation, a rationalist and a philosopher prince, just as Ophelia describes him. In seventeenth-century France there are striking parallels between French plays and *Hamlet*. However Montfluery's *Trasibule* 1663, which has a similar plot, is conjectured to be the earliest French adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

II

To eighteenth-century France the tormenting doubts and melancholy of Shakespeare's Hamlet were meaningless. The Age of Enlightenment, with its climate of rationalism advocating logic, order and clarity, regarded the play as distasteful and the character of Hamlet as hardly that of a hero but rather than of a deranged genius fit to amuse an audience of barbarians.[29] Voltaire, regarding Shakespeare as a threat to French cultural and literary aesthetics, parodied the play in an attempt to ruin Shakespeare's reputation. While praising the device of the ghost and other instances of genius and beauty, he commented on the play as a whole as "a crude and barbarous piece, which the lowest rabble in France and Italy would not stand for"—"the outgrowth of the imagination of a drunken savage."[30] His comments are representative of contemporary French criticism of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The French adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was influenced by Corneille, Racine and Voltaire. It portrays the melancholy and sentimental aspects of the author, who conceived the neo-classical theatre as a school of morality. In his *Lettres philosophiques* Voltaire wrote, "If it is given me to be of some use to my country, it can only be by putting into action on the stage a few of those great truths that thought certainly grasps in a book, but that the theatre brings to life by speaking to soul and eye."[31] Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet suffered from indifference and hostility in France on the basis of its rationalistic political and social systems and literacy modes until the latter part of the Restoration. With the development of the Romantic perspective at the beginning of the nineteenth century Shakespeare's Hamlet began to be received with new attitudes of appreciation. Critics began to understand the predicament of the hero, a character of highly sensitive thought and feeling, in his reaction against an inimical environment. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century French literary circles regarded Hamlet as portraying the spirit of their own time, one of bewilderment and disillusionment with the chaotic state of their moral and political order. The Romantics found in Hamlet a morbid melancholy that was characteristic of their own age. Francois Victor Hugo (1873) saw the conflict in Hamlet's character as the struggle between Will and Fate.[32]

The notable Hamlets of the French theatre of this period were Mon. Molé, Talma, Salvini, Rossi, Rouvierè, Madame Judith, M. Garnier, Fechter and the renowned stage interpretation of M. Mounet-Sully. The contemporary critic Lady Juliet Pollock describes Sully's portrayal of intense feeling and overwhelming passion as creating a deep emotional impact on French audiences. Her description of Mounet-Sully's interpretation of Hamlet is that of an eminent portrayal of the tragic Romantic hero, torn by the conflicts within himself and unable to be reconciled with the outside world of events. Mounet-Sully's Hamlet, confronting his father's ghost, is overwhelmed by emotion:

> In his first interview with the Ghost, as he stayed half prostrate on the great stairs leading up to the archway where the spirit of his father stood, the

> tones of his voice were deepened by the sense of awe; he seemed enshrouded in a great mystery, and the presence of the supernatural almost overwhelmed him; but this phase passed into one of passionate tenderness with the relation of suffering from the unresting soul, and rose into a towering wrath when the history of wrong, long suspected, was at last unfolded.
>
> . . . In the whole of this scene Mounet Sully seemed inspired by the soul of the poet; he was carried by the exaltation of his interview with the dead to the verge of madness.[33]

In the scene in which Hamlet confronts his mother, Mounet-Sully is able to reveal Hamlet's deep emotional conflicts and the trauma at the root of his ultimate downfall.

> . . . When Mounet-Sully approached her (the Queen) his heart seemed full of a man to a woman than as a son to a mother. Sarcastic in the opening phrases with those fine inflexions of the voice which he rose to a towering passion when, clenching the Queen's hands with irresistible force, he forbade her to move. . . . Whatever part he plays, M. Mounet-Sully's inward emotions are always wrapped closely in those of his author; he is never outside of them. It is this distinguishing quality which has made his Oedipe so pathetic and so powerful, which has penetrated into the very soul of Ruy Blas, which has filled with the grandeur of Greek poetry Racine's version of *Orestes*, and which has brought into such full life the passion of Hernani that when Victor Hugo saw it he exclaimed to the friend who was with him, "C'est mon ideal!"[34]

After the eighteenth-century climate of French hostility towards the meditative quality of Hamlet, the nineteenth century showed the identification with a Hamlet figure of the thinkers of a more introspective age. Helen Bailey refers to Mounet-Sully's representation as a highlight of the Romantic spirit:

> It was a highly emotional interpretation. Mounet, like Talma, was a man of melancholy temperament and romantic imagination who identified himself completely with the role. According to Sarcey, he did not *play* Hamlet, he *was* Hamlet, in life as well as on the stage. He made of Hamlet a man of passion and of suffering, an interpretation heartily endorsed by many critics. For some, his performance was too morbid and bombastic, marred by a Romantic exaggeration in its every aspect. For others,

notably the poet Mallarmé, it was nothing short of "an immortal likeness."[35]

III

In contradistinction to eighteenth-century France, which had at first rejected Shakespeare because of its rationalistic outlook and rigid observance of classical rules, Germany in the same period hailed Shakespeare as a great poet. Criticism of Shakespeare is largely determined by a society's principles and, as the Germans wished to abandon classical tradition, Shakespeare was esteemed by them as a new kind of drama. Compared to Shakespeare's version the original Germanic version, *Hamlet, Fratricide Punished,* was crude and naive. The basic situation here is a revenge for murder. There is in it an element of buffoonery, such as the ghost boxing the ears of one of the guards and Hamlet falling to the ground before he can be executed so that the bandits on each side of him kill each other instead. Shakespeare deleted the vulgar comedy and added the beauties and subtleties of the deeply moving soliloquies, the poetic and melancholic nature of Hamlet's character, the melodrama of Ophelia's death and the moralizing of the graveyard scene. Shakespeare's name was not connected with the primitive *Fratricide Punished*. He was first mentioned in Germany in 1682. Although early translations had a French tone, with influences of Voltaire and of classical tragedy, they recognized the individuality of Shakespeare. Lessing, in 1749, stated that Shakespeare, among other English poets that are known to Germany merely by name, should be accorded as much esteem as the French poets.[36] The first German stage adaptation of Hamlet appeared in 1773 in Vienna. Mendelssohn, the first German critic writing on *Hamlet*, remarked in his treatise on aesthetics that the "To be" soliloquy was one of the greatest instances of a form of the sublime. He stated that the eloquent and introspective nature of Hamlet, his soul swaying from side to side, carried his audience to his own heights of passion and anguish.[37] In ensuing German performances there were many changes and adaptations of the script, in spite of which Hamlet's role consistently remained active and heroic. In this period Hamlet was not a romantic character. However the "To be" soliloquy continued to captivate audiences in the awe-inspiring manner in which it was conceived by Mendelssohn.

Goethe, a prominent figure of German Romanticism, makes significant critical comment on *Hamlet* in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, 1795-6. It is generally claimed that in this work Wilhelm Meister is expressing the feelings of Goethe. Thus he says that his aim in studying is to be able to act the leading role in *Hamlet*, in which power of soul, elevation of spirit and vitality have free scope and can make the drama a complete expression of feeling.[38] To do this he would aim to penetrate the spirit of the past and touch the weight of deep melancholy as if it were on himself. Under its weight he would try to follow his model through the strange labyrinth of many a mood and caprice. Wilhelm's central interpretation of the hero's character is that he is gentle and noble, a royal flower that grew up under the immediate influences of majesty. The concepts of justice, nobility and decency, with an awareness of the elevation of his birth, were developed together in him. He was a born prince and wished to rule only so that the good could be good without hindrance. Pleasant in form, well bred by nature, obliging by disposition, he was raised to be a model of virtue and a joy to the world.[39] After hearing of his father's death and the murder and accession to the throne of his uncle, he felt himself suddenly poor in favour and possessions and a stranger in his own home. His mood turned sad, he no longer felt himself to be a nobleman and acted as a servant to everyone. He was no longer polite and understanding, but became cast down and needy. The marriage of his mother sealed his misfortunes. He felt completely brought low and his final psychic trauma was the experience of the supernatural revelation. The terrible accusation against his uncle and the summons to revenge reverberated in him, together with his father's earnestly repeated plea for his son's remembrance of him. When the ghost disappeared, Hamlet was not happy to avenge the usurpation of the crown. He was astonished and melancholy at the crime, bitter against the evil-doer and faithful to the memory of his father. He was anguished that he was born to set right the time "out of joint."[40] Hamlet now presents a mysterious paradox. He is driven to action by an irreversible external power but he cannot act until this external compulsion is resolved in himself. A great deed is laid upon a soul that is not capable of the deed. It is as if an oak tree were planted in a precious vessel that should only have contained charming flowers. The roots expand and the vessel is shattered. A noble and moral being, without the sensual strength that makes a hero, goes to its destruction under the load that it can neither carry nor throw off. Every duty is sacred to him. This one is too heavy. The impossible is demanded of him, not the inherently impossible, but only that which is impossible for him. He writhes, turns and is afraid as he is continually reminded of his task. He always remembers his purpose even though finally almost losing sight of it without ever regaining his happiness. Without altering the character of Hamlet, Goethe casts the plan of the story into a classical form which is a composite of his artistic philosophy.[41]

The Wilhelm-Goethe treatment of Hamlet gives rise to the observation that among all nations few people have a feeling for an aesthetic whole. They criticize, praise and find delight only in parts. Although Goethe was fascinated by the romantic quality of Hamlet's character, he did not view the character as a whole. The Hamlet of Goethe's creation, with its emphasis on sentiment, melancholy and psychologizing, was not a success with German stage audiences. Audiences wanted to see the hero as a man of action, a ranting, vigorous, malcontent prince. Unfamiliar with the Elizabethan background, Goethe's interpretation does not evolve from a histrionic tradition but is the creation of his own imagination.[42]

The Germans, being well versed in classical literature, were not influenced by the harsh criticism of the French neo-classicists such as Voltaire and tended to see Hamlet in terms of a family tragedy. They appreciated an introspective and emotional Hamlet as a piece of poetry. Viewing the character and the play as an artistic whole came as a later development. Since early criticisms of *Hamlet* were literary and not theatrical, there was no histrionic tradition of interpretation. With the development of the theatre tradition, the character of Hamlet as a Shakespearean hero took on greater dimensions and the play now presented on the stage was able to kindle the imagination with a deeper sense of drama. With the social and literary aesthetic controversy in eighteenth-century Germany, the interpretation of Hamlet was subject to many contradictions. The literary criticism of poets and philosophers, viewing Hamlet as a noble philosophical prince, paralyzed from action because of his revulsion with the world, conflicted with the fuller dramatic interpretation including that of the avenger and impulsive man of action as presented on the stage.[43]

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38. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 107-08.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

43. For a survey of *Hamlet* in the twentieth century, see Rachel V. Billigheimer, "Psychologica and Political Trends in `To Be, or Not To Be': Stage and Film 'Hamlets' of the Twentie Century," *Literature in Performance*, 7, no.1 (Nov. 1986), 27-35.

Belatedness in *Hamlet*

DAVID L. POLLARD

Although otherwise undistinguished, Rosencrantz is allowed to make a kind of "umbrella" speech which expresses in a generalized way a major idea in Shakespeare's *Hamlet:*

> The cess of majesty
> Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
> What's near it with it; or it is a massy wheel
> Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
> To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
> Are mortised and adjoined, which when it falls,
> Each small annexment, petty consequence,
> Attends the boist'rous ruin.[1]

Rosencrantz's solemn wisdom with its nicely turned figures is actually trenchantly ironic in that the "cess of Majesty" which worries him is already an accomplished fact in Denmark and its grievous effects well advanced. In fact, the person most responsible in an immediate sense for these developments is King Claudius—the very one to whom the speech is addressed. His mind in tumult over Hamlet's behavior, Claudius is too preoccupied to listen to the doleful abstractions of his courtier. Nevertheless they do point to important concepts at work in the play: namely, that a disastrous falling-off in human affairs is indeed quite possible; that a set of inevitable consequences flows from such a falling-off; and that human beings can perceive and understand these things and lay them seriously to heart.

It may be significant that whatever its precise date (*circa* 1601) *Hamlet*, with its death-obsessed and funereal atmosphere, appears late in the reign of an aged queen whose life was approaching its end. It is equally noteworthy that a long line of Elizabethan giants, including Leicester, Burghley, Drake, Sidney, and Spenser, had already passed from the scene and others like Donne and Shakespeare himself were ageing. The great Jacobeans—many of them—

were also great Elizabethans, only a little older. Not surprisingly, then, the idea of the "decay of nature" received renewed and concentrated attention in the first decade of the seventeenth century. In "The First Anniversary. An Anatomy of the World," for example, Donne insists that his is a "sicke world, yea dead, yea putrefied" in which "mankind decayes so soon. We're scarse our Fathers shadowes cast at noone."[2] Donne resumes these judgments much later in a sermon with an eye to asserting the fitness of God's intentions for the present hour:

> As the world is the whole frame of the world, God hath put into it a reproof, a rebuke, lest it should seem eternal, which is a sensible decay and age in the whole frame of the world and every piece thereof. The seasons of the year [are] irregular and distempered; the sun fainter and languishing; men less in stature and shorter lived. No addition but only every year new sorts, new species of worms and flies and sicknesses which argue more and more putrefaction . . . we see gray hairs in children, and we do not die old, and yet we are born old. . . .[3]

These gloomy assessments define what may lie behind the rottenness of Denmark as that in turn reveals the intent of the "divinity that shapes our ends." When Hamlet calls the world "an unweeded garden / That grows to seed" (1.2.135-36), the implication is that a monstrous carelessness has allowed a prior Edenic perfection to waste away. In other words, Elsinore in its degeneracy furnishes evidence to support the theory of the decay of nature. Furthermore, Donne's witty paradox about the human predicament—"we do not die old, and yet we are born old"—catches well, I think, the particularizing tragic situation of the play's titular figure.

One way of characterizing the "distracted globe" of *Hamlet* is to say that it is beset by a dense and pressure-filled facticity—Denmark is burdened and even overwhelmed by unalterable and irremediable facts. The first two scenes, for instance, establish the impression that the present has been preceded by an unmatchably heroic time whose central figure ("buried Denmark") is irreplaceable. Claudius himself explains the timing of an imminent invasion as motivated by a "weak supposal of our worth." Weighty historical precedent, moreover, suggestive of a remote grandeur and an internationally significant impact, places the just begun reign under an oppressive shadow. As Horatio explains, recent disruptions bring to mind parallel circumstances in Roman antiquity:

> In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
> A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

> The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
> Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets . . .
> And even the like precurse of feared events . . .
> Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
> Unto our climatures and countrymen.
>
> (1.1.113-16;121;124-25)

Horatio's analogy is in many ways discomforting, not the least because of its suggestion of Rome's supremacy. Rome was "most high," we are told, and Julius Caesar "mightiest." These are mentioned as if they were unassailable facts; with them we get the first hint that history's process is degenerative and that Elsinore, judged in the light of Roman priority, is marked by the weight of its own belatedness.

In vaguely suggestive ways the world of *Hamlet* is made to reflect the features of late and advanced cultures. Firstly, it is a cosmopolitan world. While national traits and reputations exist, still Denmark has political ties with Norway and England; Norway has interests in Denmark and Poland; and Danish students attend university in Germany and France. Also, as a sign of a developed cosmopolitanism, Shakespeare creates an incongruous mixture of peoples. Although not called such in the text of the play, the reigning king bears the name of a Roman emperor. Polonius, Cornelius, Marcellus, and Horatio also have Roman or Roman-sounding names while other characters seem to be somehow Mediterranean (Bernardo, Francisco, and Reynaldo). Gertrude, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern have German appellations; on the other hand, Laertes derives his name ultimately from *The Odyssey,* while "Ophelia" is the Greek word for "help" which she is singularly ill-equipped to supply. Finally, the Norwegian princes are oddly but aptly called Fortinbras (French: "strong-in-arms"). Hamlet, derived from the play's source with variant spelling, is appropriately Danish. In any case, by these and other means we get the rather illogical impression that many times and cultures have contributed to a sort of melting pot.

This apparent confusion adumbrates other symptoms of destabilizing change. For instance, as a sign of corrupted taste, a group of child actors have usurped popular favor from the tragedians of the city (Hamlet is told) and are "most tyrannically clapped for't." More seriously, modern soldiers are seen to be willing to risk their lives for unworthy gains ("even for an eggshell"). This sense of eroding values extends to a dangerous political crisis when citizens-turned-mob overrun the royal castle as if "the world were now but to begin, / Antiquity forgot, custom not known" (4.5.103-04). While good customs collapse, bad continue in practice. Claudius's predilection for strong liquor, signalling unsteady anxiety, is repeatedly indicated in the play. Indeed the king ceremonializes his drinking into a ritual of national representativeness by preserving a "custom / More honored in the breach than the observance" (1.4.15-16); he commands his toasts to be accompanied by drums, trumpets, and cannon. Even the gravedigger notes a falling-off in his business; he tells Hamlet of "many pocky corpses now-a-days that will scarse hold the laying in" (5.1. 155-56). Finally, Hamlet himself does not escape the censure that he has changed for the worse. The prince acknowledges that he has of late lost his "mirth, foregone all custom of exercises." In addition, twice he startles Ophelia by unexpectedly bizarre behavior which leads her to conclude:

> O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword. . .
> The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
>
> (3.1. 150-54)

This lamentation for the decay of a great mind only serves to anticipate the communal grief felt when Ophelia herself descends into madness and death.

The greatest contrast between past and present in *Hamlet*, however—that which determines the hero's embittered outlook and sarcastic rhetoric—derives from the two royal brothers, the past and present kings. The senior Hamlet's nobility is first attested to by characters less biased than his own son. The ghost's demeanor is "majestical" and Horatio notes his "fair and warlike form." Horatio also provides a narrative of the primal scene of conflict in which "our valiant Hamlet" is presented as an epic figure; later this same character says of the ghost: "'A was a goodly king." Still, the most compelling authentication of these tributes comes from the ghost himself, who expresses astonishment at Gertrude's lack of discrimination in turning to Claudius:

> O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there,
> From me, whose love was of that dignity
> That it went hand in hand even with the vow
> I made to her in marriage, and to decline
> Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
> To those of mine.
>
> (1.5. 47-52)

This blazon from eternity fixes the rightness of Hamlet's reckoning and launches his rhetoric against Claudius on a trajectory of remorseless disparagement.

Hamlet is of course literature's most eloquent *laudator temporis acti* whose insistence that a calamitous moral down-swing in the royal family has occurred gives locus to his peculiar blend of nostalgia and anger. Consequently his contrastive judgments of father and uncle tend to extreme hyperbole. Hamlet assumes the irreplaceableness of his father ("I shall not look upon his like again"), and the preemptive valuations which stem from this outlook harden into his most idiosyncratic formulations: mythic disjunctions. The two brothers stand in Hamlet's youthfully simplistic estimation as but Hyperion to a satyr. Thus when Claudius's guilt is confirmed by his reaction to the play-within-the-play, Hamlet can reduce the central antithesis between past and present to a giddy jingle:

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
    This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
    A very, very—pajock.

(2.2. 287-90)

Hamlet's role of Juvenalian scourge, however, attains its fullest declamation in the bedroom scene. Hamlet's amazement, reinforced by that of his father, issues from disbelief over the seeming irrationality of Gertrude's choices. All of Hamlet's idealism, nostalgia, contempt, and rage, are brought together when the prince draws out the contrasts which the paintings of his mother's past and present husbands exhibit:

Look here upon this picture and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command,
A station like the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill—
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now what follows.
Here is your husband, like a mildewed ear

Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! Have you eyes?

(3.4.54-68)

Gertrude cannot challenge or deny this carefully shaped, imaginatively particularized, and vividly distinguished set of disjunctions. Denmark's decadence is measured by its descent from a godlike king to a "king of shreds and patches," and Hamlet reads Gertrude's wayward appetite as the most disturbing evidence of a general disarray.

Shakespeare forces us to take note that Hamlet too shares in the problematic tendency of the world of Elsinore to be in arrears. The prince is from the outset running behind other characters to whose beforehand action he can only react. For instance, the ghost appears to others before he meets his son, and Hamlet can only say: "I would I had been there." Fortinbras and Laertes are seen getting the jump on their rival. Fortinbras, early on, is stirring for revenge, even before his Danish counterpart discovers the similarities of their predicaments. Later Hamlet envies this "delicate and tender prince" for getting on with the endeavors of heroism. While we the audience ironically may disagree with Hamlet's evaluations, in his own mind, that and other occasions inform against him. Furthermore, Laertes pursues with infinitely greater dispatch his revenge against Hamlet, which in fact he achieves before the prince is aware of it. Claudius, as well, is often steps ahead of his nephew. Of course he has popped in between the election and Hamlet's royal hopes, and redirects the latter's life by helping to persuade him to remain at Elsinore. Later, after vigorously stalking Hamlet with differing kinds of espionage, Claudius is able to deflect the prince's revenge by shipping him off to England to an intended sudden death. Even when Hamlet makes his surprising return, the usurping king counters with a second stratagem before his nemesis has devised a first. In short, these and other instances, at almost every turn of the drama, accumulate to accentuate the impression that Hamlet's essential predicament is one of reaction and of having to catch up.

At this point it may be helpful to draw upon Northrop Frye's distinction between the ironic and the tragic vision. Frye explains: "The basis of the tragic vision is being in time, the sense of the one-directional quality of life, where everything happens once and for all, where every act brings unavoidable and fateful consequences, and where all experience vanishes, not simply into the past, but into nothingness, annihilation."[4] But, Frye qualifies, "being in time is not the whole of the tragic vision: it is, in itself, the ironic vision. . . . What makes tragedy tragic, and not simply ironic, is the presence in it of a countermovement of being that we call heroic, a capacity for action or passion, for doing or suffering, which is above ordinary experience."[5] These are vital clarifications for the understanding of Shakespearean tragedy generally, and for *Hamlet* in particular. Thus far, I have been stressing the play's ironic vision, with its movement toward annihilation on a downward slope reflecting a familiar Renaissance theory of human history. On the other hand, it is exactly Hamlet's awareness of his own belatedness, I would maintain, and his transcendent emergence from its crushing pressures that provide the countermovement that Frye says we rightly look for in tragedy.

In this most interrogatory of his tragedies, Shakespeare identifies his hero with one dominant question: "Heaven and earth / Must I remember?" (1.2. 142-43). Hamlet knows that the answer must be affirmative and hence, his pain. Memory is the most tormenting affliction for one thrown into a world whose evil and decay are advanced and seemingly irreversible. And yet, on the other hand, in *Hamlet* memory is persistently associated with love, bonding, and whatever gives meaning to the continuity of the living with the dead. Thus Hamlet's love tokens for Ophelia are "remembrances." In the same spirit Hamlet invokes the idea of Christian community by requesting Ophelia's prayerful concern: "Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered." Ophelia, too, in her madness, conjoins her love for father and former suitor by strewing the evergreen symbol of remembrance and constancy: "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember" (4.5. 177-78). Even Claudius, albeit hypocritically, acknowledges the need to be livingly mindful of his predecessor and may be thinking of rosemary when he notes that "yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death / The memory [is] green." All of these instances contribute to the way the characters understand their interrelationships as well as the interactive commitment of present and past.

The ghost's lengthy narrative and placement of his son under the obligation to revenge ("Adieu! Remember me") activates in the latter the process of discovering a way out of his previous impotent maunderings. Remembering the father becomes now the catalyst for Hamlet's rise, in Frye's words, above ordinary experience. Hamlet's response to the ghost fully discloses his recognition that remembering and making a personal fresh start are but one action:

> Remember thee?
> Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat
> In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixed with baser matter.

(1.5.95-104)

While not possible to fulfill literally, Hamlet's intentions nevertheless focus his energies for expunging the irrelevancies of the past in order that he may concentrate on that one duty which can achieve retribution for a violated greatness and simultaneously provide a distinctive heroic destiny.

This self-enjoined commitment to memory furnishes Hamlet with the primary strategy by which he prepares himself for his task. Perhaps inspired by hearing about his father, Hamlet repeatedly has recourse to the rehearsal of narratives that enable him to locate and advance his state of readiness for the final transaction. Thus, for example, when the players arrive, he calls at once for a speech "if it live in [their] memory." We witness Hamlet fumblingly recall and recite the beginning lines. The relevance of the narrative is not far to seek. It is Aeneas's tale to Dido of Priam's death at the hands of "rugged" Pyrrhus, the avenging son of Achilles. Hamlet clearly identifies with the position of the surviving and belated narrator who must keep the history of his nation's catastrophe alive, however painful. The prince wishes also to steel his resolve by contemplating the ferocity of his own future role of avenging son, as bodied forth in the powerful, if distancing, medium of art. The most beneficial, if unintended, effect of the performance is, however, that it arouses a renewal of emotional intensity in Hamlet, who dissolves into self-incrimination upon beholding an actor more moved than he by the mere identification with a fiction. Of course, all of this conduces to the stratagem of catching the conscience of Claudius by an artful reminder (in the form of a play) of the king's past crime. In these ways does Hamlet school himself and his uncle in the serviceable uses of the real or mythic past.

After his astounding adventures at sea on the way to England, Hamlet pauses awhile in the graveyard as if to complete a rite of spiritual passage. The main concern of Hamlet's encounter with the ground of death and its chief denizen, the grave digger, is again memory. In this place are the material relics of the past; here the insubstantiality of human identity, and therefore, the shaky tenuousness of the past's connection with the living, are borne home to the prince. The grave-digger flings up skulls of persons whose anonymous state presents a hideous rebuke to human enterprise and the lust for lasting fame. Hamlet is forced to see, feel, and smell the evidence that challenges the idea of survival through memory. By mere chance the grave-digger can identify one featureless skull as the jester Yorick's and Hamlet rescues, for a brief narrative moment, the relic from the general oblivion: "I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy" (5.1. 185-87). For Yorick, Hamlet, reminiscing about his own youth, acts as the only custodian of memory; but although the clown's jests "were wont to set the table on a roar," the physical token of his decay nauseates Hamlet and qualifies his unconditional nostalgia for an Edenic past. Hamlet's mind turns to the absurdist folly that countervails the hero's dream of lasting distinctiveness: "Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer barrel?" (5.2. 211-14).

Hamlet nevertheless emerges undeterred by the bitter wisdom of the graveyard. As he approaches the very fate of Alexander, Hamlet is never more alive and alert to the demands of preserving his own story for posterity. Fully aware that in itself "a man's life is no more than to say 'one'," Hamlet follows the heroic paradigm of searching for an imperishable identity by schooling Horatio on the particulars of his dramatic past much as his father had done with him. Thus the prince impresses upon his friend the danger from which he has recently escaped:

> You do remember all the circumstance?. . .
>   Up from my cabin,
> My sea gown scarfed about me, in the dark
> Groped I to find them out, had my desire,
> Fingered their packet, and in fine withdrew
> To mine own room again, making so bold,
> My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
> Their grand commission; where I found Horatio—
> Ah, royal knavery!—an exact command,
> Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
> Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
> With, ho, such bugs and goblins in my life,
> That on the supervise, no leisure bated,
> No, not to stay the grinding of the ax,
> My head should be struck off.

(5.2.2,12-24)

This hectic narrative, its punctuated rhythms catching the tension of the original excitement and mysterious intrigue, rivals in exotic detail the narratives of the ghost and Aeneas. Hamlet has now begun to act in heroic business of which this is the prelude, and Horatio's position is to assume the double burden of falling behind his friend in adventuresome experience as well as being obliged to provide its living memory. It is as if Hamlet is performing, in that the rhetoric of the narrative is calculated to record all the energy, vitality, and boldness of a valuable personality. Hamlet knows that he has come into his own, and he wants this episode to be remembered in all of its vividness.

It is only after this adventure that the play's hero dares to announce himself for the first time ("This is I, Hamlet the Dane"). In the final moments of his life, dueling with Laertes, Hamlet stands before us as athletic, capable, confident, and even moving towards victory. This is Horatio's (and our) last glimpse of him. When he discovers the royal treachery, Hamlet springs at last into that action whose cause and justification he has carried so long in his mind. It is significant that Hamlet actually kills Claudius twice: once with the sword and again with the poisoned drink.[6] The second is retribution for his father's murder—the debt of memory. The first, however, is Hamlet's alone—the hero acting in his own right to redress a sense of personal injury. In one continuous action Hamlet is able to fulfill the past and stand free from it. Then, as if granted a short posthumous existence ("Horatio, I am dead"), he consummates the bonding with his friend by exacting a promise that the survivor will hereafter "draw his breath in pain" to tell the dead man's story.

Horatio does not have long to wait to assume his assigned part. Shakespeare carefully rounds out the development of the motif of belatedness by the appearance of Fortinbras. Though seen briefly in the fourth act, this character makes his true, authoritative entrance in the last fifty lines of the play. This is the latest entrance of any major character in Shakespearean tragedy. Fortinbras has his own "rites of memory" in Denmark. It is, however, as the successor to Hamlet and the first auditor of his story (as Hamlet had been of his father's) that Fortinbras achieves his position in the recursive design of the play. The drama has presented us with such a dazzling central figure that inevitably, like other "surviving" characters in Shakespeare (Cassio, Malcolm, and Octavius Caesar come to mind), the young Norwegian conqueror strikes us as likely to prove a great falling-off from his predecessor. Fortinbras's own speculation is that Hamlet might have proved "most royal." What is certain is that, from Horatio, he will hear a tale of one who was, in Donne's words, "born old." Fortinbras might see in such burdened lateness what Donne saw—a divine rebuke to humankind for being the children of Adam. Yet he (as we) must marvel at the genius and inventiveness with which his precursor has fashioned so distinctive and, therefore memorable, a moment in the universal march toward death and decay.

NOTES

1. This and all subsequent quotations from *Hamlet* derive from the Signet edition of *Hamlet* (New York, 1963) ed. Edward Hubler. I would like to acknowledge a general debt to Richard Fly's unpublished paper "Shakespeare's Interims: Structures of Time in *Hamlet*" a reading of which helped me to clarify my own reflections.

2. John T. Shawcross, ed., *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* (Garden City, New York, 1967), pp. 273, 276.

3. Cited from Donne; Alexander M. Witherspoon and Frank J. Wamke, eds., *Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry* (New York, 1963), p. 97.

4. Northrop Frye, *Fools of Time* (Toronto, 1967). p. 3.

5. Frye, pp. 4-6.

6. James L. Calderwood makes the same observation in *To Be and Not To Be: Negation and Metadrama in "Hamlet"* (New York, 1983), p. 46

NOTES

Editing *Hamlet* in the 1980s: Textual Theories and Textual Practices*

MACD. P. JACKSON

Although in editing *Hamlet* for the Oxford *Complete Works* Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells "worked particularly closely with G.R. Hibbard" (*Textual Companion*, p. 402), editor of *Hamlet* in the Oxford Shakespeare series of separately published plays, the two Oxford texts differ over many readings and Hibbard's textual theory contains one important difference from that of Taylor, who had chief responsibility for *Hamlet* in the *Complete Works*. So I want to discuss four significant recent editions, not three, adding Taylor's to those of Jenkins, Edwards, and Hibbard.[1] My aim is to consider the relation between each editor's theory about Q1, Q2, and F, on the one hand, and the decisions that create his own edited text, on the other, and so attempt a kind of stocktaking of the present state of knowledge and speculation.

All four editors agree that Q1 offers a bad text, concocted by actors who relied on their memories of the play as they had performed it; that Q2 is based on Shakespeare's foul papers and F on a tidier manuscript that represents a later stage in the theatrical evolution of the play; and that the compositors of Q2 consulted a copy of Q1 as an aid to the decipherment of their manuscript, particularly for Act 1.

These are well-established beliefs and none is likely to be overturned. From time to time attempts are made to rehabilitate Q1 by reviving the old notion that it records Shakespeare's earliest version of his tragedy or by crediting it with vaguer forms of authority. Certainly, with some correction and modification Q1 is actable,[2] and beyond its corruptions we may perhaps glimpse the kind of acting-version that governed at least one early production of *Hamlet*. But the signs that Q1 offers a defective text that has been filtered through a faulty memory, and that the actor who had played Marcellus was the chief culprit are unmistakable. Circumstantial evidence for a class of 'memorially reconstructed' texts is very strong, and so is the evidence that Q1 of *Hamlet* belongs to this class.[3] The influence of Q1 upon Q2 must also be beyond doubt, the pattern of speech-prefix indentation on their opening pages providing virtual proof, but the precise extent and nature of the influence is less clear.

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Whether F likewise exhibits some physical dependence on the printed Q2 remains uncertain, though all four editors agree that F cannot have been set directly from a copy of Q2 that had been marked up with reference to a manuscript. Jenkins is driven to postulate that F was set from a transcript of such a marked-up exemplar of Q2 (p. 73). Hibbard is doubtful whether Q2 exerted any influence on F (p. 121), and Edwards is non-committal (p. 10). Taylor (*TC*, p. 397) posits occasional consultation of a quarto by the Folio compositors, and suggests that this consultation was of the derivative Q3 (or possibly Q4), rather than Q2.

Hibbard effectively disposes of most of Jenkins's evidence from unusual spellings and other incidentals. The foul papers which lie immediately behind Q2 and from which the manuscript authority behind F ultimately derived would themselves be a source of certain orthographical links between Q2 and F.[4] They might also be the source of errors common to Q2 and F, Shakespeare's handwriting having misled both a Q2 compositor and a scribe copying the foul papers; but this explanation of shared errors is hardly available to editors like Hibbard and Taylor who believe that Shakespeare copied out his own foul papers to provide a fair copy that served as basis for a prompt-book. Pointing out that where he accepts that Q2 and F agree in error, the probable error is also found in Q3 and Q4, Taylor notes as many as eleven Q3-4:F agreements in indifferent variants. J. K. Walton has shown that such agreement over indifferent variants occurs coincidentally between F and quarto reprints that cannot have influenced it, that the number of agreements largely depends both on the total number of Q/F variants and on the number of indifferent variants introduced into the quarto reprint, and that the *proportion* of Q3:F *Hamlet* agreements to total number of indifferent variants originating in Q3 is not exceptionally high.[5] However, Taylor finds likely significance in the distribution of Q3-4:F agreements: they tend to cluster and to correlate with the presence of Q2-4:F errors. The whole question of quarto contamination of F may be insoluble, but, in the light of Taylor's new proposal, deserves further investigation.

But the main differences in the textual theories of the four modern editors concern the nature of the manuscript behind F and the variants F offers, and, in particular, the possibility that F transmits Shakespeare's own revisions to the foul papers text preserved in Q2.[6] Jenkins's edition reflects a fifty-year-old orthodoxy. Confident that Q2 was set from an authorial script, he bases his own text firmly upon it, dismissing most F divergences as the vulgarizations, sophistications, and tinkerings of compositors, scribes, and anonymous theatre folk, and attributing all F omissions to accident or to theatrical cutting undertaken without the playwright's sanction. For Jenkins, Shakespeare, like God, performed his act of creation, saw that it was good, and rested: thereafter corruption set in. The manuscript authority behind F Jenkins takes to have been a scribal transcript of a scribal fair copy of the foul papers, the original fair copy having been preparatory to the preparation of a prompt-book and the subsequent transcript having incorporated the unauthoritative "alterations and embellishments" of the actors.

In contrast, both Oxford editors, Hibbard and Taylor, taking the view that the Globe and Blackfriars were places in which Shakespeare's intentions were realized rather than betrayed, find in many Q2/F variants clear indications that the dramatist reconsidered and reworked his script in co-operation with his fellow-actors. Their view is that, as chief dramatist and actor-shareholder in the King's Company, Shakespeare, until his retirement around 1612, would have participated in every phase of the process by which his initial drafts were adapted for theatre performance. Hibbard goes so far as to conclude that F was printed from Shakespeare's own fair copy of the play. Taylor, more convincingly, posits the intervention of at least one late scribal transcript between F and the first fair copy (probably autograph), which was annotated for use as prompt-book. Both Taylor and Hibbard relegate most Q2 passages absent from F, over 200 lines in all, to appendixes, on the assumption that Shakespeare approved their excision.

Edwards takes an awkward intermediate position. Believing, like Jenkins, that Shakespeare's input into the text of *Hamlet*, virtually ended when he handed over the foul papers to the theatre company, but, unlike Jenkins, convinced on aesthetic grounds that Shakespeare was in some way responsible for F's omissions, he postulates that F deletions were Shakespeare's "composition cuts," indicated in the foul papers by enigmatic markings misunderstood or disregarded by the Q2 compositors, and that some marginal or interleaved insertions may also have been overlooked.[7] This theory allows him to reject from his edition all F's verbal variations that are not judged to be corrections to readings corrupted by the Q2 compositors, while endorsing F to the extent of placing square brackets around passages peculiar to Q2: he recognizes that according to the logic of his textual theory they ought to be removed from the text proper, but adopts a compromise solution.

Careful sifting of the evidence that has been advanced in support of these competing theories about F is perhaps the most urgent and tricky task for future textual scholarship of *Hamlet*. Some points, however, seem to me already clear. Taylor (*TC*, p. 399) cites features of F that prove Hibbard wrong about F's having been set from autograph, and in practice Hibbard's mistaken belief lures him into a docile deference to F, even when its departures from Q2 are almost certainly due to scribal or compositorial interference.[8] At 3.1.87-9 Hibbard reads: "And enterprises of great pith and moment / With this regard their currents turn away / And lose the name of action." Jenkins and Edwards believe, rightly in my opinion, that F's "pith" and "away" are both corruptions of Q2's "pitch" and "awry," but "pith" could conceivably be an authoritative substitution ill-advisedly made by Shakespeare as he fair-copied his foul papers; Taylor accepts it, but balks at "away," which must surely be a misreading of the more difficult and metaphorically vital word.[9]

Inevitably most Q/F variants are of such a kind that they could equally well have been produced by corruption or authoritative, though minor, revision. But in a few cases both the Q2 and F readings seem characteristically Shakespearian: at 4.7.7, for example, all four editors prefer F's unusual "crimeful," used by Shakespeare in *Lucrece,* to Q2's "criminal," which is nevertheless vindicated by a close parallel with *Coriolanus.*[10] More complex variation also suggests authorial tinkering. In *Shakespeare Survey 39* (1987), pp. 243-4, I discussed two passages for which neither Jenkins's nor Edwards's explanation of Q2/F differences is fully satisfactory, but F's expansions (in one case combined with excision) look like the result of authorial fidgeting as the play was freshly transcribed—which is how Hibbard and Taylor explain them.

But the most persuasive arguments for revision have reference to F's larger cuts. The case made by Edwards, Hibbard, and Taylor for thinking that these were made by Shakespeare for aesthetic and dramatic reasons has been supplemented by John Kerrigan,[11] and is rendered the more persuasive by the wider picture drawn by Taylor and his fellow Oxford editors of Shakespeare as reviser in *Troilus and Cressida, Othello, 2 Henry IV, Richard II, King Lear,* and even the *Sonnets*. As in *King Lear*, the best evidence comes from the interrelation between the cuts, suggestive of a coherent strategy, and, above all, from the manifest connection between one particular F addition and an F omission. In Q2 at 5.2.191-204 (Arden) a Lord enters and tells Hamlet, among other things, that the Queen "desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes" before the fencing match begins, and Hamlet replies, "She well instructs me." The passage is cut from F, which inserts a passage absent from Q2 in which Hamlet declares to Horatio that he repents his behaviour to Laertes, acknowledges that, like himself, Laertes has a grievance against the man who has deprived him of a father, and determines to "court his favours." Q2 and F thus give different motives for Hamlet's attempt at reconciliation with Laertes. In Q2 he is instructed by his mother; in F he is prompted by his own sympathetic awareness of Laertes's situation.[12] This indication of purposeful authorial change is not absolutely conclusive. It is possible that, as Jenkins believes (p. 44), the lines at 5.2.68-80 were accidentally omitted from Q2, in which Hamlet's speech is interrupted by Osric's unremarked entry, that Shakespeare intended the Queen's message to Hamlet simply to confirm him in his resolve to apologize to Laertes (mother and son being in perfect accord), and that somebody else was responsible for F's omission of the lines in which the Queen's advice is delivered. But Shakespeare's substitution of one motive for another seems much more likely.

And yet several of F's expansions or alterations of Q, although accepted by Hibbard and Taylor, strike me as almost certainly misinterpretations of Shakespeare's intentions as expressed in Q2. The stage directions at the beginning of 4.3 are a case in point. Page 69 (below) shows Q2's version and its interpretation by Jenkins. Page 70 (below) shows F's version and its interpretation by Hibbard. Q2's directions are undoubtedly vague. But surely Shakespeare cannot have been responsible for F's modifications? By dropping the "two or three" who enter with Claudius (and are presumably the "wisest friends" mentioned at 4.1.38) F turns the King's speech into a naively informative soliloquy alien to the dramaturgy of this play and this period of Shakespeare's career. And the speech is too disingenuous for the conventions of soliloquy; as Jenkins notes, "it publicly justifies the King's proceedings while concealing his real motives" (p. 339), which are revealed in the genuine soliloquy that closes the scene. Hibbard thinks that the purpose of F's change was to prevent an audience being puzzled or distracted by the appearance of "two or three" unknown and silent attendants. But kings customarily have mute attendants,and it is hard to imagine Shakespeare himself transforming Claudius's speech into an anomalous soliloquy, though he may conceivably have resigned himself to a change made by somebody else. Jenkins also seems right to claim that F's division of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, written into the dialogue as well as the stage directions, "cannot be what Shakespeare envisaged. The pair are never otherwise separated on stage and although only one speaks here, his *we* . . . shows that there are as usual two bodies with one voice" (p. 527). At the beginning of 4.2 Q2's *"Enter Hamlet, Rosencraus, and others"* must include Guildenstern, who is given one speech. Q2's *"Enter Rosencraus and all the rest"* in 4.3 was evidently intended to include Guildenstern in the same way. F's economical way with extras here may have been imposed on Shakespeare, but can hardly have been 'intended' by him.

Once we agree that F was not set from autograph but that it does contain some Shakespearian second-thoughts, we are necessarily forced to use our critical judgement to decide how much of F's variation from Q2 we can accept as authorial. One small detail of an editor's theory about the transmission of F then becomes crucial. Who made the first fair copy of Shakespeare's foul papers—the author (as Hibbard and Taylor believe) or a theatre scribe (as Jenkins and Edwards believe)? If a scribe (perhaps the 'book-holder') made a fair copy which Shakespeare supervised, checked, and modified, while overlooking certain misreadings and misinterpretations of his original intentions, the result may well have been such a combination of authorial and non-authorial alteration as F in my view exhibits.[13] And if there was ever only one actual holograph of Hamlet, shared Q2:F error is explicable without the need to postulate more than the mildest form of Q2 contamination of F—haphazard consultation of Q2 (or one of its derivatives) by the F compositors.

In selecting so many F variants and attributing them to revision Hibbard (especially) and Taylor do not, to my mind, fully come to terms with the evidence of Q1. They both follow F several times when Q2 and Q1 are in agreement against it. Neither Taylor's nor Hibbard's stemma allows for a second round of Shakespearian revision subsequent to preparation of the original prompt-book, which lies behind Q1.[14] So if these F readings are authoritative, either (a) Q1's variants must be memorial corruptions that have contaminated Q2, or (b) Q1 in failing to transmit an authoritative prompt-book revision has coincidentally reverted to a foul papers reading, or (c) created a reading coincidentally corrupted in the same way by the Q2 compositors. Yet it seems unlikely that sporadic consultation of Q1 by the Q2 compositors to help them decipher their manuscript copy—which is what Hibbard and Taylor postulate—would cause them to set "Hast me" at 1.5.29 and "My tables" at 1.5.107-8, if "Hast, hast me" and "My Tables, my Tables" appeared in their manuscript; in each case Q1 and Q2 agree against F, whose duplication is extrametrical. The alternative explanations, invoking coincidence, of Q2:Q1 agreement do not seem wholly satisfactory either.[15] At 1.1.65 Hibbard and Taylor both follow F in having Marcellus speak of how the Ghost has twice appeared "just at this dead hour," arguing that "just," which replaces Q2's "jump" (to modernize the typesetting) belongs to a recognizable pattern of authorial fidgeting with the text (p. 127). And yet Q1, whose authority is supposed to go back to a prompt-book that incorporates the results of any Shakespearian revision, reads "jump," like Q2. Hibbard is almost certainly right in thinking that "jump" was the authentic reading of the foul papers, since, though rare, its two other occurrences in the Shakespeare canon are in *Hamlet*, 5.2, and the near-contemporary *Othello*. On Hibbard's own textual theory "just" could be Shakespeare's word only on the terms indicated under the headings (a), (b), and (c) above; but it would be the one-and-only correct reading, corrupted in Q2 and Q1, not a second-thought.[16] The same considerations hold for such variants as F "two Nights haue," Q2:Q1 "haue two nights" (1.1.33); F "It wafts," Q2:Q1 "It waues" (1.4.40); F "whilst," Q2:Q1 "while" (2.2.106); F "enurn'd," Q2:Q1 "interr'd" (1.4.28); F "our," Q2:Q1 "your" (1.5.175); F "wiseness," Q2:Q1 "wisedome" (5.1.253): F "has," Q2:Q1 "hath" (3.1.144); and many other variants that Hibbard (pp. 125-9) attributes to an authorial process of modernization, normalization, and substitution. If the F words are Shakespeare's, they are not, on Hibbard's own theory, revisions.[17] Hibbard's preference for F "enurn'd" is perfectly justifiable, and Jenkins, Edwards, and Taylor share it, but, as Jenkins and Edwards recognize, Q2:Q1 "interr'd" must be explained by supposing "that the Q2 compositor, faced with a coinage that was not in his vocabulary, turned to the safety of Q1's familiar but weakened reading" (Edwards, p. 103).

Variants in which Q1 and Q2 agree against F evidently need further study. In many cases Q2's reading seems too acceptably Shakespearian to be a memorial error inherited from Q1. It is true that Q2:Q1 agreements are most frequent in the first Act where the indications are strongest that the Q2 compositors occasionally consulted Q1. But Taylor (*TC*, p. 399) notes that the first six scenes of F are marked off from the others by expurgation of profanity and the provision of Act and scene headings. If this section of the manuscript behind F had been subjected to greater late editorial attention that the rest, the concentration of Q2:Q1 agreement in the early scenes of the play might be partly attributable to F's greater deviation there from Shakespeare's true text.

My concern has been with the creation of a 'critical edition' of *Hamlet*. Facsimile editions of Q1, Q2, and F serve an obvious function. But readers and actors will continue to desire editions that use the evidence of these three seventeenth-century texts to reconstruct a single version answering to Shakespeare's inferred 'final intentions' for the play. Heminges and Condell lamented that their friend did not survive "to have set forth and overseen his own writings." Had he done so, he might, like several modern dramatists, have established for publication a *Hamlet* incorporating modifications to his foul papers of which he approved on artistic grounds but rejecting those over which he had had no control. It remains a worthwhile goal for modern editors to do this job for him.

Of course there are difficulties in applying the notion of 'final intentions' to anything so protean as a playscript. But the differences among the four editors considered here are due not to ambiguities in the concept of final authorial intentions but to disagreement about the point at which Shakespeare's active involvement with his script ended. If Shakespeare really did cut the passages absent from F to further his artistic design, their status equals that of those many unused lines which his prodigal genius must have consigned to oblivion long before he handed his foul papers to his fellows.

NOTES

1. My page or line references either fit all four editions or are to whichever one of them is under immediate discussion. The initials *TC* indicate Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor with John Jowett and William Montgomery, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), in which editorial decisions in the Oxford *Complete Works* are defended.

2. Nicholas Shrimpton's sophisticated review, in *Shakespeare Survey 39* (1987), 193-7, of a production of the First Quarto *Hamlet* at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, in March 1985, makes this abundantly clear.

3. The decisive argument against Q1's representing an early version of the play is that it perpetuates so many of F's modifications to Q2: since Q2 was set from foul papers and F represents a later phase in the script's evolution, Q1 must be based on a later, not an earlier, state of Shakespeare's play than is preserved in Q2. Was this later version further shortened for the stage than the lightly cut F text? Was it an abridged acting text authorized, or even prepared, by Shakespeare himself? It is hard to distinguish between three possible causes of Q1's main omissions and compressions: (a) absence of the relevant material from the play as the reporter had acted it, (b) imperfections in the reporter's knowledge of, or memory for, the play as acted, and (c) the reporter's deliberate attempt to create a shortened text for a provincial tour. Hibbard cites eight passages that although present in F have completely disappeared from Q1, and since none of them contributes to the action, supposes that their absence originates in a desire to prepare the script for "a popular audience" (pp. 88-9), but he is non-committal about whether the abridgement occurred prior or subsequent to memorial reconstruction. Passages of description or argument in which Marcellus was in no way involved would readily be forgotten by the actor-reporter, even if they were quite long, and those cited by Hibbard tend to occur within very poorly reported scenes of Q1, where memorial breakdown is already abundantly apparent. Jenkins sees one or two signs that "even the initial playhouse cuts exceeded those shown by F" (p. 22), but "haphazard shortening, due to failure of memory" (p. 22) is so prevalent in Q1 that attempts to reconstruct an hypothetical abridged stage version on which the report was based must be uncomfortably speculative. The case is different from those of *Henry V and The First Part of the Contention (2 Henry VI)*, for example, where the reporting in the 'bad quarto' texts is in several scenes good enough for the editors of the Oxford *Complete Works* to be confident that the actor-reporters' memories were fairly reliable and that certain quarto omissions or modifications originated in the official prompt-book. Complicating the problem in Q1 *Hamlet* is the fact that it twice shows traces of Q2 material omitted from F (Jenkins, p. 21, p. 56 n. 3; Edwards, p. 24 n. 1).

4. Jenkins notes that "of the items listed in which Q2 is followed by F several are not copied in the close reprints Q3 and Q4" (p. 68 n. 1), but F might have independently acquired these spellings and other anomalies from a manuscript that derived, like Q2, though less directly, from foul papers.

5. *The Quarto Copy for the First Folio of Shakespeare* (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 1971), pp. 68-123.

6. The question of the extent to which Q2, or one of its derivatives, has contaminated F has a bearing on this more important issue: shared Q2:F error cannot plausibly be traced back to the ambiguities or handwriting peculiarities of Shakespeare's foul papers if F depends, whether directly or at one or more removes, upon a revised fair copy made by Shakespeare himself.

7. However, he does tentatively assign a few authorial revisions to the next stage in the evolution of the script—the preparation by a playhouse scrivener, assisted by Shakespeare, of a fair copy intermediate between foul papers and prompt-book.

8. Hibbard detects a consistent trend towards 'modernization' and 'normalization' in F (p. 126), but it is hard to see why Shakespeare should have wanted to modernize so many of the forms in his foul papers straight after he had written them; and for such 'indifferent' variants as Q2 "a," "Tis," "ah," and "prethee" as against F "he," "It's," "Oh," and "pray thee," Shakespeare's practices in other plays support Q2, as Taylor demonstrates.

9. "Pitch," suggesting soaring aspiration, upward drive, draws out the kinetic sense of "moment" as momentum, impulsion, to form a doublet or vigorous and purposeful activity contrasting with the image of distraction and inertia in "currents" that "turn awry" and "Lose the name of action." "Pith," or inner strength, lacks connections with motion; it naturally forms a doublet with "marrow," as in "the pith and marrow of our attribute" (*Hamlet*, 1.4.22 Arden). Jenkins notes the association of "pitch" and "resolution" in both *Richard II* and *Hamlet*.

10. See my discussion of this and another pair of such variants in *Shakespeare Survey 39* (1987), pp. 244-5.

11. "Shakespeare as Reviser," in *English Drama to 1710* (*The Sphere History of Literature*, Volume 3) (London: Sphere Books, 1987), ed. Christopher Ricks, pp. 255-75. Edward's earlier "Shakespeare's Alterations in *Hamlet*," in *Literature and Learning in Medieval and Renaissance England*, ed. John Scattergood, pp. 175-84, should also be mentioned.

12. The importance of these interrelated variations is stressed by Taylor, *TC*, p. 400.

13. Among indications that a scribe made a fair copy and that Shakespeare overlooked some of his mistakes, one cited by Edwards at 5.1.252-6 (Edwards) strikes me as telling. F has here "a very bad misascription of a speech by Gertrude to Claudius. It is quintessentially a Gertrude speech, anxious, protective, sentimental, flowery, and there can be no reason except carelessness for giving it to Claudius" (p. 23); yet the blunder infiltrated the original prompt-book, since it appears in Q1.

14. Taylor is quite explicit that "even at the level of verbal detail, the occasional agreements of Q1 with Q2 against F are all attributable to Q1's bibliographical contamination of Q2, or to simple compositorial error in F, or to expurgation of profanity in F" (*TC*, p. 398).

15. In fact, Taylor's statement, cited in my preceding note, does not even envisage them as possibilities.

16. Actually, explanation (b) would allow F's reading to be a second-thought, but neither Taylor nor Hibbard ever proffers it in connection with any Q2:Q1 agreement against F.

17. A further discrepancy between Hibbard's theory and his practice concerns his handling of supposed Q2:F errors. Taylor specifies seven Q2:F readings that most editors agree to amend

and two other "likely" instances, though he himself believes emendation unnecessary (*TC*, p. 397). Of these nine probable or possible Q2:F errors Hibbard emends six and Jenkins seven, and Hibbard is the first editor to emend Q2 "Giues," F "Gyues" to "guilts" at 4.7.21. I have not checked to determine whether either editor emends any Q2:F readings not listed by Taylor. But it seems clear that Hibbard postulates as many shared Q2:F errors as does Jenkins, although his textual theory allows far less scope for such shared error to occur. After all, Hibbard claims that Q2 and F were set from separate holographs and thinks that the printed Q2 had very little, if any, influence on F. Jenkins, in contrast, claims that F was set from a manuscript dependent on an annotated exemplar of Q2, and that the annotator referred to a manuscript whose sole authority derived from the foul papers.

(For discussion of excerpts given below, see p. 64 above)

Second Quarto

Enter King, and two or three.

King. I haue ſent to ſeeke him, and to find the body,
How dangerous is it that this man goes looſe,
Yet muſt not we put the ſtrong Law on him,
Hee's lou'd of the diſtracted multitude,
Who like not in their iudgement, but theyr eyes,
And where tis ſo, th'offenders ſcourge is wayed
But neuer the offence: to beare all ſmooth and euen,
This ſuddaine ſending him away muſt ſeeme
Deliberate pauſe, diſeaſes deſperat growne,
By deſperat applyance are relieu'd
Or not at all.

Enter Roſencraus and all the rest.

King. How now, what hath befalne?
Roſ. Where the dead body is beſtowd my Lord
We cannot get from him.
King. But where is hee?
Roſ. Without my lord, guarded to know your pleaſure.
King. Bring him before vs.
Roſ. How, bring in the Lord. *They enter.*
King. Now *Hamlet*, where's *Polonius* ?

Jenkins

Enter King *and two or three* [Lords].

King. I have sent to seek him and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment but their eyes,
And where 'tis so, th'offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ, [GUILDENSTERN,] *and* Others.

How now, what hath befall'n?
Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.
Kind. But where is he?
Ros. Without, my lord, guarded, to know your pleasure.
King. Bring him before us.
Ros. Ho! Bring in the lord.

Enter HAMLET *with* Guards.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

First Folio

Enter King.
King. I haue fent to feeke him, and to find the bodie:
How dangerous is it that this man goes loofe:
Yet muft not we put the ftrong Law on him:
Hee's loued of the diftracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes:
And where 'tis fo, th'Offenders fcourge is weigh'd

But neuer the offence: to beare all fmooth, and euen,
This fodaine fending him away, muft feeme
Deliberate paufe, difeafes defperate growne,
By defperate appliance are releeued,
Or not at all. *Enter Rofincranc.*
How now? What hath befalne?
Rofin. Where the dead body is beftow'd my Lord,
We cannot get from him.
King. But where is he?
Rofin. Without my Lord, guarded to know your pleafure.
King. Bring him before vs.
Rofin. Hoz, *Guildenfterne?* Bring in my Lord.

Enter Hamlet and Guildenfterne.

King. Now *Hamlet,* where's *Polonius* ?

Hibbard

Enter Claudius

CLAUDIUS
I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose.
Yet must not we put the strong law on him.
He's loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement but their eyes;
And where 'tis so, th'offender's scourge is weighed,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause. Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz

How now? What hath befallen?

ROSENCRANTZ
Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

CLAUDIUS But where is he?

ROSENCRANTZ
Without, my lord, guarded, to know your pleasure.

CLAUDIUS
Bring him before us.

ROSENCRANTZ
Ho, Guildenstern, bring in my lord.

Enter Hamlet and Guildenstern

CLAUDIUS Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Coleridge on *Hamlet*

PRALAY KUMAR DEB

> *Hamlet* was the play, or rather Hamlet himself was the character in the intuition and expression of which I first made my turn for philosophical criticism, and especially for insight into the genius of Shakespeare. . . .[1]

Thus observed Coleridge in 1819. Controversy has raged about the assigned date of his "turn," but the authenticity of his initial interest has never been questioned. That Coleridge had "a smack of Hamlet" in himself can hardly be gainsaid. Indeed he shared a community of spirit with the philosopher-prince of Denmark, who, in spite of all his moral perceptiveness, was foiled by the introspective workings of the brain which paralyses the will. In one of his letters addressed to Mrs. Clarkson, dated 3 January, 1812, Henry Crabb Robinson wrote:

> Last night he [Coleridge] concluded his fine development of the Prince of Denmark by an eloquent statement of the moral of the play: 'Action,' he said, 'is the great end of all. No intellect, however grand, is valuable if it draw [s] us from action and lead [s] us to think and think till the time of action is passed by and we can do nothing. Somebody said to me, `This is a satire on himself.' . . . 'No,' said I, 'it is an elegy.' A great many of his remarks on Hamlet were capable of a like application.[2]

The opinion of Robinson not merely serves as confirmatory evidence of the prevalent romantic stance of discovering a personal equation in a work of art but also suggests the basic point of affinity between Coleridge and Hamlet—the kind of visionary disenchantment that gives rise to futility of action. This is, of course, not to say, as T.S. Eliot does, while disparaging the smuggled creativity in an impressionistic critic, that Coleridge "made of Hamlet a Coleridge."[3] Though not completely detached from his inner self, from the metaphysical infrastructure of his intuitive comprehension, Coleridge was nevertheless capable of realizing the essential objectivity of Shakespeare whom he figured as the depersonalized, immanent Deity of Spinoza, possessing "an omnipotent creativeness." It is not unlikely that he read more into his subject than the text warranted, resembling Jowett on Plato, or that he tried to explore the spiritual reality of Shakespeare's created universe by establishing a contact of truth and imagination with the master mind. But his criticism of *Hamlet* was primarily evaluative and intended to highlight the commensurability of Shakespeare's judgment and genius. It was at once philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic, but never marred by any excess of subjective passion. Although his greatest concern was with the character of Hamlet, which epitomized Shakespeare's greatness, he mostly employed "his descriptions, exegeses, and even explanations to enhance Shakespeare's excellence as a dramatist."[4]

T.S. Eliot criticizes those interpreters whose "minds often find in Hamlet a vicarious existence for their own artistic realization"[5] and is of opinion that both Goethe and Coleridge explained the character of Hamlet resorting to their creative sensibilities which should have been extinguished in the process of criticism. Eliot observes:

> The kind of criticism that Goethe and Coleridge produced, in writing of Hamlet, is the most misleading kind possible. For they both possessed unquestionable critical insight, and both make their critical aberrations the more plausible by the substitution—of their own Hamlet for Shakespeare's—which their creative gift effects.[6]

Even A.C. Bradley, while enunciating his 'melancholy theory' to explain Hamlet's delay in avenging his father's murder, could not brush aside the Coleridgean theory of Hamlet's excessive intellectual brooding or thought-sickness, but Eliot regards Coleridge as a real corrupter who, he believes, supplied only opinion or fancy. He raises the question whether Coleridge's *Hamlet* criticism was "an honest enquiry as far as the data permit" or an attempt to present himself "in an attractive costume."[7] It is unfortunate that Eliot does not take into account the tremendous influence that the time-spirit exerted on the emotional complex of the romantic artist. J.B. Beer has rightly pointed out that the predicament of the romantic artist originated in his awareness of a universe alienated from human glories and his desire to contemplate a universe other than the universe of common sense perception.[8] Faced with what T.E. Hulme describes as "split religion," he lived in an unstable imaginative sphere, a lonely, diminished, fallen angel, evolving an art of struggle and anguish in pursuit of a timeless ideal. Coleridge was, after all, a romantic artist, sharply conscious of the crisis in culture and sensibility, and when he took to the business of criticism, his inquiries were naturally directed towards the exploration of spiritual realities in a work of art. I may venture to suggest that he tried to achieve his ideal with reference to the philosophical perspective of his mind which worked under the unremitting strain of self-isolationism and self-involution. His critical study of *Hamlet* is a case in point.

Coleridge was consistent in his analysis of the psychology of Hamlet. His Prince is a man of profound intellectual capabilities, whose "native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." He thinks "too precisely on th' event,'' tries to resolve energies but is ultimately goaded on to indecisive action, thanks to his tormenting reflectiveness. He has a world within himself, a subjective world detached from the everyday world of external events; and as he feels more at home in this world of internal images than anywhere else he becomes purely a creature of meditative faculties and is unable to rush headlong into action. His energy of acting is dissipated in his "hesitation and irresolution" that produce "the lingering and vacillating delays of procrastination." The fragments of action he accomplishes only reflect the impelling force of chance or passion. I may quote a few important remarks made by Coleridge to show how he communicated deep-searching insights into the problem and mystery of Hamlet.

A. Hamlet beheld external things in the same way that a man of vivid imagination, who shuts his eyes, sees what has previously made an impression on his organs.[9]

B. He [Hamlet] is a man living in meditation, called upon to act by every motive human and divine, but the great object of his life is defeated by continually resolving to do, yet doing nothing but resolve.[10]

C. In Hamlet I conceive him [Shakespeare] to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to outward objects and our meditation on inward thoughts—a due balance between the real and the imaginary world. In Hamlet this balance does not exist—his thoughts, images, and fancy [being] far more vivid than his perceptions, and his very perceptions instantly passing thro' the medium of his contemplations, and acquiring as they pass a form and color not naturally their own. Hence great, enormous, intellectual activity, and a consequent proportionate aversion to real action, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities.[11]

The extracts quoted are indicative of Coleridge's sure-footed movement among the shifting furniture of his hero's mind and attest to his method of assessment which was organized on the basis of psychology.

One of the main reasons for Coleridge's emphasis on the psychological intricacies of Hamlet was that he regarded Shakespeare's play as a closet-drama and repudiated the histrionic tradition of *Hamlet* criticism, initiated by David Garrick and scrupulously pursued by Charles Kemble, J.P. Kemble, and Edmund Kean. There is no denying the fact that a play by Shakespeare, notwithstanding its original excellence as a piece of literature, becomes more arresting than ever when it is translated into stage terms, being associated with the unifying skill of a director (like Stanislavsky), the visual imagination of a designer (like Gordon Craig) and the histrionic talent of actors (like John Gielgud whose production of *Hamlet* which he played in New York in 1935 has been acknowledged as one of the finest of the century). But Coleridge was far from accepting stage considerations and conformed to the romantic ideal of character-study. Indeed his interpretation of the psychology of Hamlet seems to owe considerably to the tradition of character-studies introduced by such eighteenth-century critics as William Richardson, Henry Mackenzie, and Maurice Morgann. It cannot be said with certainty that Coleridge was directly indebted to any one of these critics, but it is unthinkable that an avid and discerning reader, such as he was, should have been entirely ignorant of his English predecessors.

Much has been made of the German influence on his Shakespearian criticism, of the alleged cribbing in his philosophical suppositions and enquiries, although he himself protested that he had formulated his theory before he saw Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst and Literatur*. The influence of Schlegel certainly confirmed, developed, and moulded many of the ideas of Coleridge, but the extent to which this influence spread has proved a subject of controversy.[12] Resolution of this controversial subject is outside the purview of my discussion. I would, however, submit that the conceptual affinities between Schlegel and Coleridge were inevitable, for both of them studied the works of Kant, Lessing, Herder, Schiller, and perhaps Richter, and had been students at Gottingen under Heyne. What is more, they were both romantic critics who raised a standard of rebellion against the neo-classic rationale of generality and 'mechanical' procedure.

In analysing the character of Hamlet Coleridge exhibited his depth of understanding and richness of perception, but to say that he neglected the art-form and technique of Shakespeare's play will be a distortion of the truth. J.R. de J. Jackson has pointed out that a vast majority of Coleridge's observations on Shakespeare's command of theatrical knowledge occurred in his marginalia and manuscript remains which the public had no opportunity to see at a time when the reputation of the theatre was being severely undermined. It was natural for him to conceal his interest in the technicalities of stage production and to concentrate his attention on the literary aspects of Shakespeare's plays in view of the aesthetic delight to be provided for the lecture audiences. Nevertheless he registered his sense of the theatre in a few critiques. Shakespeare's preparation of the spectator was a highly effective dramatic technique, and Coleridge "studied Shakespeare's methods of eliciting appropriate responses to dramatic effects or of achieving the requisite dramatic illusion, and he tried to show how Shakespeare contrived to maintain the illusion once it had been achieved."[13] His analysis of the very first scene of *Hamlet* is a marvel of criticism that aims at rendering the whole sequence dramatically convincing.

> Yet the armour, the dead silence, the watchfulness that first interrupts it, the welcome relief of guard, the cold, the broken expressions as of a man's compelled attention to bodily feelings allowed no man,—all excellently accord with and prepare for the after gradual rise into tragedy. . . .[14]

The analysis also reveals the characteristics of his critical genius at its best. T.M. Raysor refers to them in a precise way:

> . . . the imaginative sensitiveness of observation and description which makes the reader more profoundly conscious of the dramatic illusion; the acute psychological analysis of the character, followed immediately by psychological or moral generalizations from the rich stores of Coleridge's own thought; the comprehension not only of the point of view of the solitary reader, but of the spectator, of the actor, and of the dramatist himself as he plans out his technique.[15]

In the course of furnishing fragmentary notes on *Hamlet* Coleridge praised the manifestations of Shakespeare's judgment and genius, his language, poetry, and characterization, his interfusion of the lyrical with the dramatic, especially in the third scene of the play, but his analysis of the first scene remains positive evidence of striking originality and vividness.

Coleridge gave nearly half of his attention to the first Act of *Hamlet;* and his criticism of this Act testified to his interest in the dramatic presentation of things supernatural which, in order to produce a "credibilizing effect," must be invested with "a semblance of truth'' (to borrow the phrase from his *Biographia Literaria)*. Paul S. Conklin observes that in his commentary on the supernatural appearance "Coleridge presents three worlds, and does it within a dramatic framework: the visitor from beyond the grave appearing in the here-and-now; and Hamlet, who steps from the world of his own ábstraction to meet the visitor."[16] The Ghost appears on the stage suddenly and abruptly and "the reader is totally divested of the notion that the figure is a vision of highly wrought imagination."[17]

It is interesting to note that the opening scene of *Hamlet* has attracted the attention of T.S. Eliot, but there exists a good deal of difference between his norm of critical evaluation and that of Coleridge. Coleridge thought of the dramatic illusion which Shakespeare succeeded in creating in this scene, while Eliot says that the "examination of this one scene is enough to show us that verse is not merely a formalization, or an added decoration, but that it intensifies the drama."[18] Coleridge wanted to measure the excellence of Shakespearean drama primarily in terms of characterization. Hence his emphasis on Hamlet's reaction to the appearance of the Ghost. The moment before the Ghost enters in I, iii, Hamlet speaks of other things, the coldness of the night, the striking of the clock, and even reflects sententiously on the Danish custom of wassailing. Commenting on the wassail music speech Coleridge said that in addition to revealing "the predominant idealism, the ratiocinative meditativeness" of Hamlet's character

> it has the advantage of giving nature and probability to the impassioned continuity of speech instantly directed to the Ghost. The momentum had been given to his mental activity, the full current of the thoughts and words had set in, and the very forgetfulness, in the fervor of his argumentation, of the purpose for which he was there, aided in preventing the appearance from benumbing the mind. Consequently it acted as a new impulse, a sudden stroke which increased the velocity of the body already in motion, while it altered the direction.[19]

Coleridge brought out the individuality of Shakespeare's manipulation of dramatic speeches that prove eminently successful in spotlighting the traits of a dramatic character in a particular context of dramatic illusion. He made searching explorations of the psychological complexities of Hamlet in the light of the speeches assigned to him and even showed the divergent aspects of his character, his despondency and his impulsiveness, his irresolution and his promptitude, his aversion to action and his enthusiasm, though sporadic, to respond to the exigencies of the moment. The appearance of the Ghost brings about a temporary release of Hamlet from his insistence on the abstract values of ethics and accelerates the velocity of his otherwise withdrawn mind "O'er which his melancholy sits on brood." Eliots's focus of interest is, however, on the poetry of the play—on Shakespeare's exploitation of poetic speeches that intensify the structural emotion and excitement of the drama and achieve the intensity of music by communicating deeper levels of suggestions. The Coleridge/Eliot dichotomy as evidenced in their critical assessment of the opening scene of *Hamlet* is more manifest in their formulation of poetic theory as a whole: the former advocated total psychic involvement, while the latter thinks of the extinction of personality; the former emphasized the organic power of imagination, while the latter looks for the subtle design of music—but that is a subject which is outside the purview of my discussion.

NOTES

1. *Shakespearean Criticism, ed., T.M. Raysor (London, Dent, Everyman's Library, 1960)*, I, 16-7. All references to Coleridge's criticism of Shakespeare's plays are to this edition.
2. *Ibid.*, II, 181-2
3. 'Hamlet and his Problems,' *The Sacred Wood* (London, Methuen, 1960), 95.
4. Morris Weitz, *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (London, Faber and Faber, 1972), 179.
5. *Op. cit.*, 95.
6. *Ibid.*
7. 'The Function of Criticism,' *Selected Essays*, Second Edition (London, Faber and Faber, 1934),33.
8. *Coleridge the Visionary* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1959).
9. II, 150.
10. II, 155.
11. I, 34.
12. See for example René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750—1950. The Romantic Age* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1961), 156; and Raysor (n. 1 above), I, xxviii.
13. "Coleridge on Shakespeare's Preparation," *A Review of English Literature*, ed., A. Norman Jeffares, VII, 1 (London, 1966), 54.
14. N. 1 above, I, 18.
15. Ibid., I, xvii.
16. *A History of Hamlet Criticism, 1601-1821* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), 138.
17. N. 1 above, II, 151.
18. "Poetry and Drama," *On Poetry and Poets* (London, Faber and Faber, 1961), 77.
19. N. 1 above, I, 22.

Hamlet's Ghostly Presence

ROBERT F. WILLSON, JR.

When Shakespeare's ghosts appear on stage, their mission is generally to confront their killers and prophesy their deaths. Sometimes these shades disturb the sleep of their victims, as in *Richard III* (5.3), where the casualties of Richard's plotting alternately curse him and praise Richmond. In *Julius Caesar* (4.3), the slain general's apparition startles Brutus with the news that the two will meet again "at Philippi." Banquo's spirit disrupts the banquet (3.4) that Macbeth hoped would solidify his grip on the Scottish throne. By the time that ghost departs, Macbeth has demonstrated to all who attended that he possesses none of the desirable qualities of host and king. Only in *Hamlet* does the otherworldly visitor call upon a third party to carry out his revenge, even revisiting Hamlet (3.4) to remind him of his duty. In fact when Hamlet determines to follow his father's shape to the top of the battlements, Horatio and the other soldiers on the watch fear for his safety (1.4.63ff.). They know, if the prince does not, that the ghost might threaten his "sovereignty of reason," drawing him into madness. Instead, Hamlet seems to return following this encounter in a state of mind and behavior which suggests that he has assumed more than just the responsibility of revenge.

Hamlet's new-found identity is thus an imposed rather than a self-willed role.[1] Even before the critical meeting, however, this demeanor is marked by its physical and psychic distance from the court world Claudius has established. In 1.2, his black mourning garb suggests that his proper environment is the night, a setting in which spirits freely walk abroad. The opening words of his first soliloquy likewise hint that he would be more comfortable were he composed of the substance commonly associated with ghosts and the night: "O that this too sallied flesh would melt, / Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!" (1.2.129-30).[2] Though this exclamation has been received as a suicidal wish, it also could signal Hamlet's longing to join the realm of spirits that we know his father moves in. For much of the play he haunts the recesses of Elsinore as if he were a ghost, and other characters often react to his appearance as if they were confronting a damned spirit.

After his transforming encounter with the Ghost, Hamlet visits Ophelia, who later describes his appearance and behavior to Polonius:

> Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
> No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
> Ungart'red, and down-gyved to his ankle,
> Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
> And with a look so piteous in purport
> As if he had been loosed out of hell
> To speak of horrors—he comes before me.
>
> (2.1.75-81)

This is the first documented instance of Hamlet dressed in ghostly garb, though the description suggests that his behavior has about it the quality of a performed role. Certainly Hamlet is testing Ophelia here: his obsession with Gertrude's hasty wedding to a killer has made him suspicious of all women. But something of the ghost's otherworldliness has rubbed off on Hamlet, lending to his character an unnaturalness that is augmented later in the action. This identity likewise serves to heighten the pathos attending the hero's discovery of his terrible loss. Ophelia's account of his departure from her testifies to Hamlet's mood of despair.

> At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
> And thrice his head thus waving up and down
> He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound
> As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
> And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
> And with his head over his shoulder turn'd
> He seem'd to find his way without his eyes,
> For out a' doors he went without their helps,
> And to the last bended their light on me.

Ophelia's eloquent account points to a ghostly persona in three instances. Hamlet's shaking his head up and down three times recalls the Ghost's movements in the opening scene, where he made clear his unwillingness to speak to anyone but his son.[3] In addition the number three carries a mystical weight that adds to the supernatural mood of the Ghost's encounter with members of the watch and to Hamlet's meeting with Ophelia. The hero, like a Senecan shade, has returned from the "underworld" of his father with terrible knowledge and an apocalyptic mission that requires him to cancel all former relationships. Ophelia's allusion to the sigh that shatters Hamlet's form offers further evidence of the transformation of his character. (Lawrence Olivier emphasizes this transformation in his portrayal of an ethereal Hamlet departing from Ophelia in his 1948 film.) She has witnessed a kind of ritual suicide, the hero escaping into another plane of existence. Her final reference to his departure, his leaving the room without any apparent help from his eyes, makes evident the unnatural, possessed state he now moves in. Ophelia's report suggests that his world is a limbo of ambivalence comparable to the purgatory from whence his father came. At this point in the plot, then, the hero-ghost identity metaphorizes his divided soul; he knows he must cure the diseased world of Claudius, but he also suffers from the paralyzing misogyny that his father's words only seem to have reinforced. Fixing the light of his eyes on Ophelia, he clearly fears that his beloved will betray him just as Gertrude has betrayed the memory of his father. Ophelia's closing speech in the nunnery scene (3.1.150-61), during which she has been subjected to unwarranted abuse, further reveals her role as terrorized witness to ghost-like behavior by Hamlet: "O, woe is me/T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see."

The next major occasion on which Hamlet emerges as shade is during the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* (3.2). While most of his remarks are delivered with a fool's bawdy sarcasm— "That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs"—Hamlet's impatience leads him to interrupt the play-within, shouting instructions to the slow-moving Lucianus. His prompter's words are "Begin, mutherer, leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge." Since Lucianus is nephew rather than brother to Gonzago, Hamlet can be said to confront his own image in scolding the actor. More important, his harsh directions to perform the deed rather than mouthing threats directly foreshadow the Ghost's prompting in the closet scene (3.4.110-14). Just as the Ghost disrupts the real world of Denmark and its ceremony, Hamlet barges into the illusive realm of the play-within intent on gaining revenge.

As the Ghost of *The Murder of Gonzago* Hamlet has made the tragedy his own story, threatening Claudius (through Lucianus) with just punishment for his crime. Thus Claudius's sudden departure is motivated not only by the replay of his foul deed but also by the realization that Hamlet intends to avenge it. Needless to say, the king reacts as if he has seen a ghost, calling for light—ghosts return to their haunts at daylight—and rushing to his closet to pray. Hamlet's gleeful comment to Horatio— "I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound"—likewise marks the hero's and Horatio's acceptance of the real spirit's claims. Here and elsewhere in the play theatrical character and event serve to corroborate the hero's suspicions about others who have donned masks to hide their true identities. Yet instead of acting on this proof, Hamlet lapses into the fool's part, content for the moment with the cleverness of invention. Like the Ghost, he cannot act for himself but must spur others to perform his wishes.

Hamlet's behavior in the prayer and closet scenes reveals two further shadings of his ghostly persona. Observing Claudius's pleas for divine forgiveness, his sword remains suspended like that of Pyrrhus in the First Player's depiction of him. But like the ghost of his father, Hamlet proves unable to break through the barrier that separates him from Claudius, finding himself suspended, an audience member watching an actor on stage. Prayers were of course believed to be weapons in the struggle to keep away spirits; Claudius's inability to confess, however, intensifies the irony of Hamlet's inaction. With Gertrude, Hamlet replays the scolding or prompting performance we witnessed earlier, in the nunnery scene and the interruption of the play within. But as in those instances Hamlet overacts, his histrionics forcing the Ghost to enter and remind him of his true purpose. Surely Shakespeare wants us to remember Hamlet's own words to the players: "O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags . . .; it out-herods Herod. . . ." (3.2.8-14). By tearing at his mother's conscience Hamlet has departed from the assigned script, and the Ghost must remind him that the end of acting is "to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature." Instead of avenging hero Hamlet has metamorphosed into the poor player performing "inexplicable dumb shows and noise." This bombast issues in the murder of Polonius, a parody of the required revenge.

After Hamlet's return to Denmark and the graveyard, he confronts Claudius and the burial party as if he were a ghost. (His uncle might indeed have been shocked to death had not Hamlet sent him the missive announcing, in defiant terms, his return from England.) The struggle with Laertes, taking place either in or outside of Ophelia's grave, foreshadows their final struggle in which both men become spirits.[4] Their rashness makes them easy prey for a Claudius whose heart has grown so hardened by evil that he fears neither shade nor soldier. Yet in the graveyard setting the attendant mourners serve as audience for Hamlet's emergence from the dead; once again the mood of wonder that we encountered at the play's opening is revived by the entrance of an unexpected, menacing guest. With his departing couplet, Hamlet claims a heroic identity for himself and, at the same time, assumes the spirit of revenge so far represented only by his father's shadow: "Let Hercules himself do what he may/The cat will mew, and dog will have his day" (5.1.291-92).

This invocation of Hercules is important for two reasons. It may be intended as a direct allusion to the flag picturing Hercules shouldering the globe which reportedly flew over the theatre.[5] Hamlet too carries the heavy responsibility of setting right the fallen, corrupt world established by his uncle.

Now it appears that the hero is indeed prepared to enact the Herculean part in earnest; resolving to fight Laertes without regard for his provocation suggests that Hamlet has watched closely the career of Fortinbras. His challenge to Laertes— "I'll rant as well as thou"—carries the additional connotation of assuming a role in a medieval morality play. It seems that Shakespeare underlines Hamlet's new-found resolution by alluding to the stage: an actor has learned, after long rehearsal, the part assigned to him. Since Hercules would have been known to an Elizabethan audience as a worthy, Hamlet's identification with his ancient counterpart marks another step in the heroicization of his character.

In addressing Laertes, moreover, the hero expresses the wish to dissociate himself from a former persona, one that might have wronged a friend and fellow-sufferer. Hamlet seems in fact to be aware that Laertes stands as a mirror image of himself. Both have experienced the loss of fathers who were murdered by passion-blinded men; both seek revenge for these crimes, believing that they are acting as agents of justice. Yet Hamlet's use of the third-person pronoun disembodies him in another sense, suggesting that he has grown into the spirit of his father:

> Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet!
> If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
> And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
> Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
>
> (5.2.223-36).

Just as Antony acted out the revenge foretold on the night before Philippi, Hamlet here puts on the cloak of avenger as he had been instructed by the Ghost. Now the time for rehearsal, for the testing of various roles, is past, and Hamlet must perform in earnest before a courtly audience.

To reinforce this concept of becoming, Shakespeare invites comparison of the final scene with earlier episodes. Acting as another Lucianus, Hamlet completes the role that was interrupted during *The Murder of Gonzago*. Fiction is transformed into reality here, the hero's actions, following Laertes's accusations, breaking the illusion of peace and order that Claudius has so painstakingly built up. The free and open court world now approximates a trap springing on the inventor as well as his victims; by ordering the doors locked (311), Hamlet insures that his audience-jury will preside over the long-delayed punishment of a tyrant. Arranging for the action to end in a duel, moreover, Shakespeare evokes memories of the duel between Hamlet's father and Old Fortinbras which Horatio narrated in the play's opening scene.[4] His purpose seems to be to underline Hamlet's growth into the heroic identity defined by his father's chivalric encounter with his Norwegian opponent. The three-part division of the duel sequence, with Osric's judgments marking each segment, likewise echoes the triadic pattern of the Ghost's appearances. As Claudius watches the unravelling of his scheme, the "Player King" must feel that he is being forced to attend a supernatural interlude. The shadow of his murdered brother returns in the son's shape to administer both poison and sword wound to the killer. Claudius has seen—and touched—a ghost. Hamlet's letter to Claudius precedes the duel: "Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes, when I shall . . . thereunto recount of my sudden and more strange return" (4.7.43-5).

With his dying words Hamlet affirms the apocalyptic character of these final events:

> You that look pale, and tremble at this chance,
> That are but mutes or audience to this act,
> Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, Death,
> Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
> But let it be.
>
> (5.2.334-38)

His words are directed at both the stage and Globe audiences, but they also recall the frightening responses of others in the play to ghostly intrusions by Hamlet. (In particular we may recollect Ophelia's "O my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!") Those who have seen the murders and heard the accusations are led to believe that the only explanation of these horrible acts is a supernatural one. Put in theatrical terms, the stage audience must wait for the epilogue (which Hamlet begins but cannot finish) before fully comprehending the moral of the spectacle it has witnessed. This choric duty falls to Horatio, the only character whose loyalty to Hamlet is never questioned. Just as he was charged with bringing news of the Ghost to his friend in the beginning, he is here responsible for informing the court and Fortinbras of Claudius's treachery. In a masterful stroke of symmetry, Shakespeare has Fortinbras enter the Danish court as if he too were a ghostly figure, assuming, as Hamlet has done, the identity of *his* father. Designating this mirror figure as his choice in the election, Hamlet thus moves to restore to the kingship the qualities of courage and honor that were lost when Claudius murdered his father. Now, indeed the ghosts of *Hamlet* can rest secure.

NOTES

1. Critics have of course designated other assumed or imposed roles for Hamlet. Two recent essays review the cases made of his antic disposition and actor's part. See Michael Graves, "Hamlet as Fool," *Hamlet Studies*, 4(Summer and Winter, 1982), 72-88; and David Ian Rabey, "Play, Satire, Self-Definition and Individuation in *Hamlet*," *Hamlet Studies*, 5(Summer and Winter, 1983), 6-26. I am aware of no study that proposes a ghostly role for the hero.

2. All citations are from G. Blakemore Evans, ed. *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974).

3. Lewes Lavater's *Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night*, trans. by "R.H." (London, 1572), announces that ghosts may appear at any time, in any guise, according to "Popish doctrine." A Protestant skeptic of such teachings, Lavater concludes that ghosts in fact do not exist. The spirits or shapes that men have reported seeing are no doubt good or bad angels, "or some other forewarning sent by God." Citing the suspect Catholic doctrine, Lavater also informs his reader that those who converse with such spirits should not accept one "sign" or statement but wait until they hear it repeated three times before giving it credence.

4. The Folio stage direction—*Leaps in the grave*—refers only to Laertes; there is no similar direction for Hamlet. But Hamlet's subsequent imprecation to "Take thy fingers from my throat" proves that the two are engaged in a mighty struggle whose location serves to foreshadow their demise.

5. According to Andrew Gurr, *Hamlet and the Distracted Globe* (Edinburgh: Sussex Univ. Press, 1978), p. 10. Gurr argues convincingly that the Herculean hero's burden parallels Hamlet's.

6. As I have said, the final duel also seems to complete the interrupted action of *The Murder of Gonzago*. Shakespeare may have likewise had in mind the end of *The Spanish Tragedy*, where Hieronimo emerges from his acted role to achieve his revenge.

The Man Who Knew Hamlet: Trewin's Recollections of the Prince of Denmark

A. BANERJEE

John Courtenay Trewin, who turned 80 last December, is in many ways an extraordinary man. He has been a drama-critic for various English magazines and newspapers continuously for more than half a century: he still writes for *Illustrated London News* (since 1946), *The Lady* (since 1949) and *The Birmingham Post* (since 1955). He is also the author of more than fifty books, mainly about the theatre. But what would strike the readers of this journal as being particularly unique about Trewin is the fact (as revealed in his book *Five & Eighty Hamlets,* published by Hutchinson in 1987) that he has "met" eighty-five "personal premieres" of *Hamlet:* he saw the play first in 1922, and the latest one in 1986 (and no doubt a couple more have been added to the list since the publication of the book). At the very outset, Trewin disclaims being an academic critic of the play or an historian of *Hamlet* actors: I would like to reciprocate by writing this appreciative note rather than a scholarly evaluation.

Trewin was born and brought up at the Lizard in Cornwall, and although he has lived most of his adult life in London, he remains obdurately Cornish: he lists his recreations as "all things Cornish." Neither his family members nor his townspeople were interested in the theatre but Trewin recalls that the rugged natural surroundings amidst which he grew up, "the sombre range of the Lizard cliffs and its plummet drops: Penolver Point, where a Norwegian barque, *Hansy* was wrecked, spinning and lurching in a November gale" helped him to visualize Hamlet's world when he chanced upon it at the age of eight: "ours was a world where Hamlet could conceivably have lived" (p.5). *Hamlet* was then for him "the best of the plays as well as the simplest" (p.4), and although through the years it has revealed its baffling complexities, it remains for him a source of excitement: "excitement is the key" (p.xii), a point which, Trewin fears, tends to get "overlooked in argument" (p.viii).

"Excitement" is indeed the operative word which runs through all the *Hamlet* performances that Trewin recollects, and it helps him to define and shape that all too elusive a quality "the meaning" of the play. The *raison d'etre* of much of *Hamlet*-criticism, indeed this journal, is that *Hamlet* only grudgingly yields its enigmatic secrets, partially, on each given occasion. Trewin's achievement is that he has been able to form in his mind—and now transpose it into book form—the composite picture of *Hamlet*, comprising different interpretations offered by various actors, directors, managers, stage-techniques, through changing times. What is equally, if not more, important is the fact that Trewin's understanding of the play has coincided with theatrical excitement so that Hamlet remains for him, as it should (pace Hazlitt), a living, dramatic reality. L C Knights praises Martin Dodsworth, the author of *Hamlet Closely Observed* (1985) because he is "vividly aware of the play as theatre, where bodily movement, changing tempo and contrasting patterns of physical action are essential aspects of meaning." Trewin's *Hamlet* is nothing but "a play as theatre."

Trewin watched his first "Great" *Hamlet* when he was only 16: Hamlet was played by Ernest Milton, an American actor who had made England his home. Milton's Hamlet was the Prince of Ophelia's panegyric—one whose mind was that of "the courtier's soldier's, scholar's" and for Trewin, watching this Hamlet was an electrifying experience. While recalling his experience, Trewin does not remember whether the actor had answered any of the many *Hamlet* problems, but he can still recall the "throat-tightening excitement, of an emotional force sometimes demonic" (p. 22). This, Ophelia's Hamlet, made so movingly real by Ernest Milton, became for Trewin the archetype which was rendered variously by subsequent actors. Ten years later, John Gielgud, whose voice had "the range of a violin, a Stradivarius controlled by a master" (p. 37), created a Hamlet of lofty spirit who was "swayed by a thousand subtle influences, physiological and pathological" (p. 37): a man of delicate sensitivity whose philosophic mind urged him to act in a manner it winced at. Three years later, Laurence Olivier presented an impressive Hamlet of another complexion, a man possessed by the Oedipus complex. Trewin, like the rest of the audience, got carried away by this athletic Hamlet with a fiery mind and a sense of urgency, little aware of (and caring less for) the subtle hints of the 'mother-love' which had induced Hamlet's spell-binding frenetic behaviour. Not long after, the young Alec Guinness brought before Trewin "the youngest, the quietest Hamlet [he] had known; an old farm-neighbour would have labelled him a 'thinking man'" (p. 57).

After the War, Barry Jackson, the creator of the Birmingham Repertory, moved to Stratford and re-organised it. He brought with him a promising actor called Paul Scofield. When Trewin saw him there in 1948, Scofield appeared in early Victorian costume, "in black frock-coat and narrow strapped trousers

... in a mid-nineteenth century setting." Despite Trewin's initial misgivings about such attempts at "contemporary relevance," the play "asserted itself immediately, and the staging became of minor importance." This was because Scofield's Hamlet was "the man most of [them] knew" (p. 69). Only that now he appeared as a man who was "romantic and haunted, 'most dreadfully attended,' by the thronging phantoms of his brain." Scofield's finely controlled voice (Trewin is deeply sensitive to theatrical voice), "now taut, now huskily caressing" (p. 69) projected Hamlet as a compelling spirit, poignantly agonized, no less tormented than his father's ghost.

The sixties, however, revealed a new, modish Hamlet which Trewin found hard to either recognize or reconcile himself with. Peter Hall, the dynamic young director of the National Theatre, who responded not only to Kott's influential *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* but also to the prevailing ethos of disenchanted, apathetic youth, produced a *Hamlet* the young could easily identify themselves with. David Warner played this Hamlet: "anti-romantic, gauche, brusque and nasal, not always audible. When his 'antic disposition' was on he began by wearing spectacles and a funny hat. He lay around on the floor" (p. 132). Though such a Hamlet was far from his vision of him, Trewin did recognize the 'music' of Shakespearean verse asserting itself despite Warner's attempt to tone it down in accordance with his disillusioned portrayal. Moreover, he was convinced that such a trendy Hamlet—like the trend itself—would soon pass. And it inevitably did. But alas! the Hamlet of Ophelia's description, into which performers like Milton, Gielgud, Olivier and Scofield had breathed pulsating life and energy, has seemed more and more a matter of recollection than reality. Subsequent actors who have played the role, Alan Bates, Richard Chamberlain, Albert Finney, were good, but all that Trewin is prepared to give them is "a sound second class degree" (p. 145). Ian McKellen— "His passion had a ring" (p. 155)— and Derek Jacobi get a special mention, especially the latter for renewing Trewin's faith in the Prince of Denmark he has always known.

Thus it is fascinating to observe Hamlet revealing different aspects of his personality through the eyes of Trewin who has been watching him excitedly for more than six decades. Though on each occasion Trewin is centrally curious about what kind of Hamlet it is going to be, he is equally eager about the other characters, the scenery, the setting. Ophelia, now a well brought-up girl and now in agonized dementia; Claudius, now "strong and baleful" (p. 140) and now "a bluff, rubious intriguer in mutton-chop whiskers" (p. 70); the Ghost, now an agonized and tormented spirit and now impressive "in its barking way" (p. 93). Even the minor characters are of great interest to Trewin: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Fortinbras, Osric and even the Priest at Ophelia's funeral, because "they belong to the fabric" (p. 176). The Earl of Shaftesbury was perhaps the first to record (1710) the feeling that *Hamlet* "has only ONE character" but Trewin, without denying the basic truth behind such a statement, finds the smallest character humanly appealing. Thus Cornelius, one of the ambassadors to Norway, utters precisely ten words, "In that, and all things will we show our duty" (1.2.40) but Trewin is able to visualize him as "a diffident functionary who would have got no higher in the Diplomatic Service because of a maddening failure to express himself in public" (p. 176)!

Trewin has also seen the setting of the play change through the years: as a young boy he had found that the castle was a matter of a few curtains against frayed tapestry, but on the really professional stage it has varied between the conventionally romantic to open areas to "an oppressive chamber set" (p. 177). In more recent times, the setting has tended to be more and more bare, with perhaps a pair of chairs for thrones. Trewin's encounters with the "Queen's bed" have been very interesting: the "closet," to which Hamlet goes, contained in the 1920s a sofa or a couch, but with a growing interest in Freudian ideas and in the Queen's sexuality a bed took a prominent place in the closet. It was left to Kenneth Tynan to wonder *"why* 'there should be a bed stage centre in every production of this scene. It is never mentioned and never slept in'" (p. 178).

It is not hard to visualize Trewin watching the different *Hamlet* performances for the last sixty-odd years (and indeed, in the future years) with a renewed sense of excitement as well as understanding. His Hamlet is the "noble" Hamlet whose love had driven Ophelia to distraction and at whose death Horatio was moved to invoke the angels to sing him to rest. Within this basic framework, he reveals his extraordinarily rich personality differently as Hamlet-actors approach him in diverse ways. Didn't questions about Hamlet's "delay" or "madness" bother Trewin? No, because Trewin has come to "know" Hamlet as Ernest Milton had claimed to have "known" him. And if you "know" the character that well, you don't need "the argle bargle" (p. 46) of psychology to explain his character or action.

PRODUCTIONS

Hamlet: Tragical, Comical, Historical, Pastoral, Political*

Dobchev's initial idea (in 1986) was to stage *Hamlet* from the point of view of the grave-diggers—a reading true to his taste for the grotesque, the plebeian, the ironical and the intellectual. But as the production got postponed by one year, he changed his mind, deciding to make his first attempt closer to the text. After that, in an unspecified future, he might try innovations upon a material known from the inside.

The troupe with which he had been working for the last couple of years in the small provincial town of Haskovo, was ripe for his purpose. A dozen young actors, united by the ambition to prove their talent, and enthusiastic, after a series of successful productions, were eager to tackle THE play.

The rehearsals started in October 1987 and took the actors by surprise. It was not the classic-romantic play that they knew so well, it was not about Renaissance man and his crisis, nor about the universal yearnings of a free spirit. It was about here and now, burningly up-to-date, thrillingly (almost dangerously) political. Dobchev had managed to turn all the main issues of *Hamlet* into modern ideas and problems typical for the Bulgarian intellectuals of the 80s, thus making it easier for the actors to get inside the skin of their characters, and then to step out of that skin and comment on the basic dualism of art/reality.

The constant interplay between artificial reality and real artificiality is a key pattern of this production. It could be traced back to Hamlet's own paradoxical dual status as mad/sane, a hero who is both madder and saner than all the rest. Dobchev elaborated on this unity of opposites and turned it into a method. His Hamlet, played by Roumen Traikov, embodied the archetypal paradox of the whole play: both tragical and comical, delicate and brutal, shy and obscene, vulnerable and dangerous, open-hearted and masked, joker and killer, prince and pauper, unpredictable, inscrutable, ever-changing and constant. Traikov was a definite success in this tour de force, and the whole production was meant to revolve around his axis.

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* Review of the production directed by Ivan Dobchev in Haskovo, Bulgaria, 1988.

The other main characters were reduced almost to one-dimensional coinages of Hamlet's brain, as if carrying on their faces his own attitude towards them. Claudius and Gertrude were like Madame Tussaud's wax figures, with yellowish faces, a colour that the courtiers gradually tended to assume in the course of the play. The King was an obvious arch-villain—short, skin-headed, degenerate—in the costume of a 19th century monarch, with gilded epaulettes, medals, boots, spurs and all. Gertrude wore low-necked dresses of a style somewhere between the 18th and the early 20th century. Her artificiality, as that of Claudius, was taken for granted from their first appearance, and they had only one scene each to add more human dimensions to their image. For the King this was the prayer scene—his soliloquy whispered intensely, with all the lights dimmed. For Gertrude—the closet scene, where she appears in a simple dressing-gown, bare-footed, with loosened hair and no make-up. But in both cases the scenes did not work powerfully enough and the audience did not quite feel the real human beings behind the wax figures. The royal couple remained basically the embodiments of Hamlet's judgement of them.

Similarly Polonius was deprived of his initial dignity and paternal wisdom, becoming just a white-wigged senile clown and stupid busy-body, coming straight from an Italian opera buffa. No less operatic was Laertes—an absurd musketeer in full panache, blue satin suit, long hair, wide-brimmed hat and incredible feathers. In fact they were not real characters in their own right, made of reality, but rather such stuff as dreams are made on. Hamlet's bad dreams.

The production starts with the Prince getting ready to take a bath. Scene 1 is cut, we just hear strange echoes of it in the background. Then the court scene with Claudius's introductory speech comes as a flash-back in Hamlet's mind. Everything seems so very artificial, so very absurd and operatic. Gradually it becomes indeed an opera, sung by the King, Polonius, Laertes and the whole court. A bravura scene ending with applause.

Pushed to the end of estrangement, we are brought back to (Hamlet's) reality. Naked in the bath-tub, the Prince groans disgustedly the "Oh, that this too too sullied flesh" monologue, and then falls asleep, exhausted. And it is in his dream that Horatio, Marcellus and Barnardo come with news of the strange "thing" seen on the battlements. Then appears the Ghost himself, in a Roman toga, sword in hand. Played by an actor with an imposing figure and deep voice, the Ghost is able, with his desperately old-fashioned poetry, to move his son (and the audience), and to make him swear vengeance. Hamlet cuts his hand with the sword in order to put a blood-mark on his forehead—the token of his oath. The Ghost has disappeared, but the blood-mark remains, and the sword remains beyond the 'dream,' invading 'reality.'

In Dobchev's production there are no clear boundaries between real and unreal, subjective and objective, mock and serious, theatre and life. After each climax of seriousness (and empathy) there is an anti-climax of irony. The point is, as the director puts it, "to carry the audience with us as deep as possible, to stir them thoroughly, and then to clap our hands and tell them: hey, this is theatre!" The interpenetration between the different layers of artificiality/reality works all the time. The weapon with which Hamlet will kill Polonius will be the very same mock-sword taken earlier from the player—I.ucianus. Art(ificiality) can become reality.

Hamlet himself, with his decision to put an antic disposition on, has already become an Actor—thus using Art in order to produce Truth out of false Reality. Here, in the island of freedom and sanity that his art (madness) gives him, we see Roumen Traikov at his best, in his weird costume of a jester, with trunks, hose, fouled yellow stockings, bells, curly wig, and a pair of shackled shoes on his neck. Inside his motley outfit Hamlet can do as he pleases, he can say anything. He has cut his direct links with reality, and entered another (parallel) world of ghosts, dreams, insanity, and art. His fellow-travellers in this parallel reality—the actors—furnish the environment where he feels most at home. They are therefore given a lot of prominence in the production, where they appear (together with Horatio) as the only positive characters. Meanwhile the Prince has made his crucial discovery—the idea to use the "Mousetrap" in order to catch the conscience of the King. The Actor has become Director.

The victory of Hamlet over Claudius in the "Mousetrap" scene is celebrated boisterously at a drinking and singing party held by the actors, Horatio, and the elated Prince: an openly dissident company of boys and girls who shout anti-Claudian songs to popular tunes, inviting the audience to join them and sing along. This is the triumph of Art over Reality. It cannot last longer than a moment, but Dobchev makes that moment last.

Here comes the interval—as if to protract and celebrate to the full that Pyrrhic victory. The curtain re-opens as the party is in full swing. The actors are given freedom to improvise obscene parodies of previous scenes, making wild fun of Claudius and everything that comes in sight: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, then Polonius. There is hardly anything directly political in this scene, but the whole atmosphere of unrestricted merriment at the expense of the establishment is subversive, and builds an unconscious background of tension.

The following scenes adopt the more or less conventional pattern and come as a conceptual anti-climax, in the face of the dense dramatical material—Claudius's prayer, the closet scene, the killing of Polonius, and the King's plot to send the mad young man to England. On his way to England, Hamlet (accompanied by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in 19th century tail-coats and shabby attache cases) meets Fortinbras and his army. The Norwegian prince comes almost straight from Star Wars (as far as the limited budget of a provincial theatre can afford), in a modern pilot's outfit, to the sound of passing helicopters, jet-planes and tanks. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are cowed by this fire power, showing them all the backwardness of obsolete Denmark. But to Hamlet this is a revelation:

> . . . Rightly to be great
> Is not to stir without great argument,
> But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
> When honour's at the stake.

Dobchev sees this soliloquy as a clue to a major change in the whole philosophy of Hamlet; as he puts it: "I interpret the last part of his life as a transformation of Hamlet into something which is a product of the environment, a product of the time in which the character develops." Dobchev's Hamlet chooses to play the game of Claudius, and accept its rules ("My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth."). From here on he is infected, he has become part of the 'system', part of that world of conspiracy, murder, dishonesty and violence that he was so disgusted with.

Ivan Dobchev has always emphasized that the Danish prince in this play should become more and more of a Bulgarian intellectual of the 80s: "I don't care about no Shakespeare and no Denmark!" Therefore it was only natural that the question of vengeance was pushed aside, and the issues of moral choice in the face of a corrupt society gained prominence. Hamlet's solution—to try to beat Claudius at his own game—implies accepting the rules of that game (by forging the letter and sending his former friends to death, without remorse). Dobchev disapproves of this choice and thinks that it is here where lies the tragic failure of Hamlet.

It is questionable whether this shift of emphasis really got across to the audience—despite artful cutting and the efforts of the actor. The audience could not be sure whether it was not another one of Hamlet's masks.

While the Prince was making his moral choice, there was little moral choice left at the court, as all the other characters were denied any depth and real character of their own. Ophelia, whom we had seen previously assaulted by Claudius, while she was praying, and then raped behind the curtain, appeared in the revolting image of an arch-whore: another drastic victim of the utter wickedness of the court.

But in spite of the whirling events that happen in Hamlet's absence, there is a certain drop of dramatic quality as there are no deep moral issues at stake. Everything is on the surface, and the play moves on rather inertly as a plot-machine that is bound to produce the well-known final result. The interlude with the grave-diggers is given full length and weight, but it stands too much aloof from the intended line in Hamlet's development—to the point that we are practically losing that line.

In the final scene we see Hamlet and Laertes in snow-white modern fencing-suits with electric rapiers (we are reaching the present), and an expert Osric, leading the fight in technical French. After the four deaths, here comes the future—Fortinbras in his pilot's outfit takes over. The curtain closes upon his ironical synthesized 'laughter'. Reality triumphs once more upon the search for an ideal.

But has anything changed in Denmark? Yes, answers the director, there is some hope. It is the story of Hamlet. However, not the real story, but its 'improved' variant: Harotio will tell it to th' yet unknowing world, in such a way, that (says Dobchev) "he will become a real hero, an idol for someone after. This is the hope."

Once more reality should become art(ificial) in order to transcend its own limitations and come back as a purified ideal. But did the audience get this message? Was it the final message of the play? And was the director satisfied with his work? Not completely. He kept on experimenting from the very beginning of the rehearsals, up to the first-night performance (29 January 1988), and afterwards. He was not fully satisfied, and kept on making changes, getting rid of some of the formalistic gimmicks, inherited from old avant-gardes. Yet some of the initial enthusiasm, freshness and inspiration was lost. Haskovo is a town with a limited—both in terms of quantity and quality—potential of intellectuals and theatre-goers, and there was not enough wind to keep the fire ablaze.

The critics kept almost silent about the production, especially while it was still on the stage. The troupe was not invited to perform, neither in the regional centre, Plovdiv, nor in the capital, Sofia, as was originally expected. Director Dobchev was temporarily out of grace with the authorities for having taken part in an ecological committee, and this may have affected the fortunes of his *Hamlet*. Well, more often than not, reality is an important factor in art.

Had this production been born on a stage nearer to the world's attention, it might have been heralded as a masterpiece and a refreshing methodological achievement. The inspired eclecticism of the show, the kaleidoscopic mixture of the tragical and comical, the pastoral, historical and political, lent it a timeless quality, running with ease across ages and styles, genres and methods. There were a number of shortcomings: the director should have given a larger tether to Claudius, Gertrude, and the Polonius family; some more ideas were needed for the second half of the play—to keep its higher initial standard. But Ivan Dobchev did keep his promise to make an intellectual production which is at the same time good entertainment combined with that ironical blending of opposites which is the very style of our times.

GEORGI TODOROV

REVIEWS

A Review of Periodical Articles (1988-89)

It wasn't just Webster who was possessed by death, but the special quality of *Hamlet* is its extension of obsession into a study of the consequences of death for those left behind. The Hamlet who begins by brooding neurotically upon a recent death and the responses to it of those most nearly touched, his mother and himself, is the same Hamlet who ends by repeatedly insisting that someone reliable be left to report his own story and thus prompt appropriate responses to his own death. Personal responses to death require the formality of due public ritual, perhaps as a token that the community shares and so alleviates an individual's grief, perhaps as a confirmation that the dead person's status receives its fit public recognition. The disturbance within private responses achieves in *Hamlet* its agonizing public symbol in the disruption of public ceremony.

James V. Holleran[1] observes in the major recent critical article that Ophelia's is the only Christian burial to appear on stage in Shakespeare's plays but its rites are, as Hamlet says, "maimed" (5.1). In this, it is like the play's other burials, those of Hamlet senior, Polonius, even Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who go without "shriving time allow'd" (5.2). This breakdown of funeral rites reflects a general destruction of ceremony in Claudius's Denmark. The denial of full burial rites for Ophelia, though apparently legal (the priest seems to act within his authority in denying them—neither Laertes nor Claudius challenges him), strikes an audience as unfair, especially when the funeral is further disrupted by the unseemly words and actions of Hamlet and Laertes.

But "ritual will out": the play suggests that ritual is so essential that it will emerge somehow, in a distorted form, whenever prevented. Thus Holleran proposes that there is actually, within the drama, an extended ritual for Ophelia, which stretches back to Gertrude's narrative of her death, the gravediggers' speculation on the cause of her death, and Hamlet's reflections on death, and which reaches forward to the banquet in 5.2. A pattern thus forms of "report of death, comic inquest, meditation on death, graveside rites, burial, and post-funeral banquet."In this extended ceremony, as in all such in the play, everything is a distortion, each incident being either unconscious of its significance or a parody of proper forms.

The other funerals are similarly "maimed." King Hamlet's is ruined by Gertrude's failure to observe the correct period of mourning and by the falsifying of the cause of his death. Polonius is unceremoniously rushed off to be buried "hugger-mugger." As in the case of Ophelia, elements of a funeral ritual for Polonius appear elsewhere in distorted form: in Laertes's playing the role of coroner in demanding of Claudius the circumstances of his father's death, and in Ophelia's madness, an extreme version of grief, her distribution of flowers and allusions to her father in scraps of song providing compensatory rites.

5.2 brings the process Holleran describes to a climax, as three intended rites (Ophelia's funeral banquet, as earlier outlined, a court entertainment and a murder plot) all become distorted within a setting which parodies a Protestant Communion Service or a Roman Catholic Mass. The poisoned wine and mock altar-table signal the warped ritual which appropriately closes the drama. Only at this point is a proper funeral ritual prescribed, when Fortinbras orders for Hamlet himself a full military burial (but one, we might add, which does not appear within the confines of the play).

Holleran's searching essay strikes a chord very much in tune with the deep central concerns of our play. *Hamlet*'s recurring interest must lie, partly at least, in this plumbing of ideas at the heart of our perception of life's sorrow and the searing need for its expression in due form. Yet our human response is, so often, tinged with the humour which keeps us going, and *Hamlet's* complete vision reflects this, too. The intimate connection between the comic and the serious provides the material for an interesting note by John Scattergood.[2] He relates the question and answer formula found in Hamlet's exchange with the pedantic gravedigger to that of epitaph verse, in which the dead body identifies itself in response to questions or asks a passerby to guess its name. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor's *Complete Works* attribute to Shakespere the epitaph on the Stanley Tomb at Tong, in which the writer invites the question of the identity of the dead and provides his own answer, as well as the "extemporary epitaph on John Combe, a noted usurer" of Straford, in which the devil answers to claim Combe as his. Puns and jokes were common features of such verse (the Stanley Tomb puns on the name), so that this sort of dialogue could be seen as lending itself naturally to witty exchange.

A sense of humour is also necessary for literary critics if they are to reflect fully and truly the quality of the works they study. One critic happily possessed of this quality is R.F. Fleissner, who contributes a nicely turned observation on the "sallied"/"solid" crux in the form of a conversation between those stalwarts of mystery, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.[3] Taking as his starting-point Tennyson's comment on the issue in an 1880 letter to Furnivall, Fleissner wittily uses Conan Doyle's familiar method by which the (τοο, too?) solid Dr. Watson acts as foil to Holmes's detective flair. So Fleissner gives Watson the task of offering defences of Folio's "solid," thus automatically setting them in a disadvantageous light. "Solid," claims the good doctor, might be OK because it's only soppy foreigners who view Hamlet as a weak introvert: "We true-blue Englishmen believe that the Danish Prince was robust, an active individual, and not the self-centered, Fitchte-like egoist that Romantic criticism has made out." Watson does not suggest more, but surely the friendship between Hamlet and Horatio has all the signs of having been sealed on the rugger fields of Wittenberg? Unlike that Osric character, of course. . . . To Holmes, then, lies the task of exposing the absurdity of "too too solid": "Well, really, Watson, it appears to be quite redundant. Flesh is solid to begin with. Can you imagine it in a state other than one of solidity?" Holmes, eager as ever to hunt the motive, has an explanation for Tennyson's final preference for the Folio reading. The laureate, alas, always had a penchant for pretty phrases devoid of meaning.

The best jokes have a serious foundation, and Fleissner's pastiche makes its textual point. Defenders of Folio will protest that Fleissner's allocation of arguments to the two characters provides ready-made evaluation, and that Watson is not the best-equipped literary critic in fiction. So, will someone rise to the challenge with an appropriate riposte?

W. HUTCHINGS

NOTES

1. James V. Holleran, "Maimed Funeral Rites in *Hamlet*," *English Literary Renaissance*, 19 no. 1 (Winter, 1989), 65-93.

2. John Scattergood, "A Graveyard Formula in *Hamlet* V.i.115-131," *Notes and Queries*, 35 no.4 (December, 1988), 470-1.

3. Robert F. Fleissner, "Sherlock Holmes and Shakespeare's Second Most Famous Soliloquy: The Adventure of Hamlet's Polluted Flesh," *Thalia: Studies in Literary Humor*, 10 no 1, 43-47.

Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture. By David Bevington. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984. Pp. 227. No price indicated.

The title of David Bevington's recent study predicts to perfection what a reader will encounter. It is a survey of the ways in which the plays speak to us without words, or in conjunction with words, based on the premise that drama, more rigorously than any other art form, depends upon the interplay between the spoken word and the visual image—a fact endowing the image with "a remarkable power, too often overlooked by readers of the dramatic text" (p.188). Bevington provides an excellent summary of the major work in the field of visual signification preceding his. He also reminds us of the importance of spectacle, icon, ceremony in Elizabethan society, updating Tillyard's and Barber's work by reference to the anthropological views of Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner, and by dramatizing for us the continual tensions between conventional meaning and Shakespeare's brilliant playing with those meanings. "Shakespeare continually deconstructs his own art," but always, Bevington asserts, in ways that finally confirm rather than deny the possibility of meaning.

Yes, in medieval morality plays what one saw was what one got, a simplicity that disappeared in Elizabethan drama, most particularly in Shakespeare's unceasing dialectic between seeming and being. The chapter headings themselves delineate the book's organization and treatment: "Visual Interpretation: Text and Context," "The Language of Costume and Hand Properties," "The Language of Gesture and Expression," "The Language of Theatrical Space," "The Language of Ceremony," and "Maimed Rites: Violated Ceremony in *Hamlet*," and a final summarizing Epilogue.

The early chapters draw on a wealth of examples, of particular value to those of us who look for new ways to link verbal and visual aspects of the plays. Bevington loves to lead us toward interpretive limits, and then warn of possible excess, reiterating his belief that visual signs are never the final touchstones of meaning. Some spatial golden mean keeps him always at a sensible center-place. This judicious stance may cause some readers to feel like those proverbial "darling daughters" who could hang their clothes on a hickory stick but not go near the water. However rebellion against such parental caution proves either the wisdom of his admonitions, or the value of contradictory re-thinking.

The final chapter on *Hamlet* focuses on a series of "main'd rites" which stand as a major metaphor for the play, and carry Bevington's concerns with ceremony as a visual and verbal indicator to their conclusion. Before I take specific issue, let me describe the way Bevington's chapter unfolds.

Hamlet's own attitude toward ceremony is initially respectful—evidenced by his welcoming of friends and the players. As he becomes progressively aware of its shams and of the complexity of reading all signs, he grows more satiric and wild. In a world where nothing is "honest," Horatio is the discriminating eye; his "most precious gift for Hamlet is his ability to sort out what is real from what is specious in the elaborate ritual of courtly ceremony" (p. 182). Repeatedly, Hamlet's behavior is seen as "a protest against a corrupted ethic."

Bevington expatiates on the "speaking" of the opening scenes, underlining the various means by which Shakespeare articulates the atmosphere at Elsinore. Building on Maynard Mack's well-known essay "The World of Hamlet," he shows us the enigmatic questioning, the symbolic darkness, the inversion of proper hierarchy. Claudius' georgeous costumes are opposed to Hamlet's suits of black: Hamlet's distance from the King on stage signals his distance from rightful inheritance. Ophelia's burial is the exemplar of all other main'd rites in the play, reminding us of the death of King Hamlet, the hasty burial of Polonius, and that marriage at which the "funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables." Indeed, burials and weddings are two faces of one coin in this society held together by a subverted principle of similitude.

Hamlet's behavior in the graveyard scene confirms for Bevington the new equilibrium of the Prince on his return from the aborted English venture, Osric's behaviour incorporating all that is wrongly compliant in the court. Penultimately, we are shown a validated murder of Claudius. Bevington writes:

> Through the killing of Claudius, the stage action of regicide is at last legitimized. It enacts the vengeance demanded of Hamlet by his father, yet its unpremeditated suddenness on Hamlet's part makes it, in his eyes at least, the work of providential rashness (186).

(To say so is to put words into Hamlet's mouth. He praised rashness for his ability to send Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths in England. Does Bevington himself see this as evidence of Providence? Polonius, Laertes, and

Fortinbras are "rash." If Providence is rash also, what is its true nature? Is God the displacement of man's violence as well as its sanctioner?)

Finally, we learn that Hamlet's funeral, staged by Fortinbras, contains a "kind of reincorporation," a ceremony in which the military orderliness

> completes something left unfinished in the abortive rites of passage for old Hamlet, Polonius, Ophelia and others who have died. Ceremony is at last not simply masquerade, as it was for Claudius, but a thing of substance that restores some hope of perceivable meaning in the ceremonial signs that hold together the social and moral order. Hamlet's iconoclasm toward those signs and his lament for a lost world in which those signs once had meaning are answered to some degree (though not without irony as well) in the ritual solemnity of Hamlet's passage toward death (187).

My own response to this final, short chapter (thirteen pages) is two-fold. Much of what Bevington writes is incontrovertibly true and eminently sensible. But there's the rub. Its wisdom is so conventional that one suspects his reading of *Hamlet* came first, the demonstrations added by a hurried Procrustes. In spite of the fact that many of the particular insights are finely discriminated, one objects that the use of ritual to prove the corruption of this society, under this King, contradicts the major premise of the book: that all staged ritual is ambiguous. If this is so, then what we miss here is the plumbing of such mysteries, the expatiating of paradox, a balancing of opposed interpretive possibilities. Rather, we are led out of darkness into the flat light of foregone conclusion.

One of Bevington's operative suppositions is the belief that the Danish past was distinctly superior to the present. Rituals performed then stood in honest relationship to the occasion. For example, the duel between Old Fortinbras and King Hamlet was "fair and chivalrous" (178). The Ghost was a figure of "unparalleled dignity." Thus the whole play is seen as a radical falling off and then a recuperation. Yes and no. While it may be argued that all things are relative and that King Hamlet was certainly superior to his brother, Shakespeare seems to have gone to some length to point up the tragic fact that all men who rule and most who do not are, or become, violent and rash. Indeed action itself is often the direct result of such motivation. King Hamlet himself presumably took advice from the egregious Polonius, slept on the job, his "custom of an afternoon," and "smote the sledded Polacks on the ice," when his anger overcame him during diplomatic negotiations. Hamlet *does* remember his childhood and young manhood as a finer time but his fall into the particular present, out of Wittenberg and the enclosed and oddly extended adolescence, suggests that we all tend to idealize our parents, society, the past, precisely because we have not known them fully. Yes, this present is terrible; I suggest only that Bevington's view of the past may be more sanguine than the signs indicate, King Hamlet more similar to other rulers than dissimilar.

Another way of putting this is to wish that there had been a steady look at the duel itself as one of the central "maim'd" rites." As everyone knows King Hamlet's duel with Old Fortinbras was fought on Hamlet's birthday, the same day on which the gravedigger was hired. Such a fact suggests that the duel is a symbol of gestural, psychological and structural import. It tells its own tale about the way patriarchal society works. Peculiarly intrinsic to *Hamlet*, the duel is a ritualized form of desire and aggression performed not only by King Hamlet, Fortinbras, Laertes, Lamord, England, pirates, and Hamlet in a circumscribed present, but, as the texture of allusions insists, by Caesar's murderers, Jeptha, Pyrrhus, and Cain. Hamlet is trapped into the final duel of the play against his heart's advice because society does entrap the wisest, because the fulfilling of a son's duty cancels out the possibility of change or any radical transformation of regressive pattern. As I have argued in these pages before, Hamlet does have a recipe for change. He articulates it in the advice he so ardently presses on his mother in 3.4. Behind that advice lie the ethical resources necessary for transforming the self, those prescribed by Christian humanism: avoidance, compassion, mercy, and new-seeing. Hamlet's aberrant behavior *is* a protest against a corrupted ethic, as Bevington argues, but it is an ethic in which he progressively participates. Given the ways in which the duel organizes the play, can it ever be merely a gentlemanly game? Bevington's scrutiny of this custom would have added a dimension to his study that it will lack for some readers.

Bevington looks briefly at the figure of Osric. He sees this lapwing as the polar opposite of Hamlet. So he should. Costume, gesture, language require it. But such is the complexity of this play that we may also find the Prince his terrible double. Both are emblems of the culture that produced them and both comply with its customs as Osric with his dug before he sucked it. It would take an astute director to point up this resemblance, of course, but the connections are there in the language and the motif as Bevington himself may be suggesting, when he reminds us early on that Hamlet uses the words "comply" and "garb" in welcoming Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to court. Osric is an exaggeration of these twins of misfortune but in Hamlet, the distinctions that separate men break down so catastrophically that all finally wear their kinship in a kind of metaphoric incest. Shakespeare enforces analogies to test our own ability for appraisal in all his dramas but nowhere so subtly as in Hamlet. Over and over, Hamlet and Claudius express the same insights. One is a hero and one a villain, but by the time the play draws to its close, we must work harder than Horatio cared to, to excuse or understand some of Hamlet's actions, to see that like the player, Hamlet has a role in a revenge play that he might have rewritten.

Bevington's initial insistence that there is always ambiguity in ceremonial moments and patterns is contradicted, if unwittingly, by his own firm reading of the ending. He finds the murder of Claudius "legitimized." Yet, if we are glad to see the end of this evil king, murder itself remains problematic—to judge from the dictates of Hamlet's heart. How are we to interpret the fact that Hamlet chooses to ignore his heart's message, or his iteration that there is "special providence in the fall of a sparrow?" Because the line originates in the Bible, is that a sign that Shakespeare intended us to accept it as gospel,or does it enact the fact that we all, like Polonius, use scripture to rationalize our own actions? Had Hamlet asked the right questions, he might have obeyed that set of ethics which he erased. Providence needs continuous redefinition.

The interpretation of Hamlet's funeral as a "reincorporation," a sign of future hope, seems to me the most unacceptable part of Bevington's reading. He admits that there is irony in a military funeral for one not a soldier, but does not register the fact that we are returned to a version of the Hamlet-Fortinbras contest at the beginning of the play. That Hamlet would elect Fortinbras, that hot-head at whom he marvelled for his senseless raid on Poland, is a sign of just how tragically Hamlet *has* worked himself "to his own conceit." Staged ceremony is as oblique a signifier as any other visual sign—for the election of Fortinbras may be read as a reintroduction of the customary violence under the guise of orderly ritual. Is military orderliness necessarily healing? Why is such a ceremony less "maim'd", say, than Ophelia's funeral? It may be, as Bevington implies, that the resolution achieved by ritual itself, at least on the emotional and aesthetic level, can offer a sense of closure as in the theater, that it can return a society to a sense of normalcy after severe disruption of customary forms. But surely this funeral is not less of a masquerade than other rites seen or referred to. Shakespeare stages it in a profoundly ironic way, it seems to me, to reiterate that the strong of arm will wield power, that property rights are an on-going cause of contest, that history is bound to repeat itself in spite of those rare moments in which "all is truly hallowed" and "gracious."

Bevington has designated Horatio as the perfect reader, the man able to tell the sham from the real. If there is any hope offered at the end of this dark play, it inheres in Horatio's promise to tell Hamlet's story to those who are left to hear it. Of this gesture, this rite, Bevington makes no mention. This moment of potential clarification, of art, enacted on a stage, may predict that some beneficent power will counteract the forces of aggression, for art has that putative power to change men's understanding and their ways. Art is the true enemy of "that monster, custom." It is possible, although we are not privy to that story—only to the final cannon shots that pronounce the death of one who might have proved most royal "had he been put on." Those shots, first heard as the annunciation of Claudius' wassailing at court, may be darkly eloquent signals of the future.

We all read *Hamlet* according to our own lights. Thus we interpret the play's rituals accordingly. While I do not share Bevington's premises about the Danish past, his view of an enlightened Hamlet, the play's legitimization of this regicide or the restoration of social and moral order by Hamlet's funeral rites, I do recommend the book itself to students, teachers and all would-be interpreters of Shakespearean drama. It is a significant contribution to the study of signs.

JOAN HUTTON LANDIS

***'King Lear' and the Gods*. By William R. Elton. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988. [First pub. in 1966 by The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery.] Pp. 374. Index. Cloth: $30; paper; $12.**

***Shakespeare: The Play of History*. By Graham Holderness, Nick Potter and John Turner. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1987. Pp. 240. Index. No price indicated.**

That the University Press of Kentucky has brought out two decades after its first publication a second edition of the book is an indication of its continuing interest despite changes in the Shakespearean critical climate. As the author points out in the postscript, "*King Lear* Studies: 1967-1987," present critical concerns with the theatrical performance of the plays "contrast with the critical fashions of previous decades, which comprised application of Renaissance psychology, image-pattern approaches, and orthodox political-religious contextualizing."

One reason for the book not being dated may be that, without using today's fashionable jargon, Professor Elton's stance is not radically different from much contemporary critical theory: he emphasizes the text's plurality of meaning, its deconstruction of its own avowed message and the discourse it releases between conflicting cultural / social / political / theological schools of opinion. Also implicit in his analysis of *King Lear* is the role that reader-response would play in determining meaning.

But more than its being still critically in fashion, one wonders whether the argument of the book (that despite its many Christian allusions, *King Lear* is overwhelmingly a pagan tragedy depicting a pagan king sceptical of *his* gods), which has a special application for the last decade of the twentieth century in which "we [are] left darkling," is not the real reason for its continuing appeal, evidenced in its re-publication in both hard cover and paperback formats.

For Americans the sixties were years of anguish and soul-searching. The assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy, and the unending, seemingly purposeless, and increasingly brutal Viet Nam war were in some ways a flashback to Lear's question: "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" Today, with terrorism--to name just one form of violence--rampant in almost all parts of the world, the answer to Lear's question seems as elusive as it was then.

As may be recalled, throughout *'King Lear' and the Gods* there are references to *Hamlet* and, since for readers of this journal, despite other attractions, "in the meantime some necessary question of the play [*Hamlet* is] . . . to be considered," I shall confine myself to the Hamlet references while not losing sight of the book's main thrust.

Elton believes (with R.A. Foakes*) that "*Lear* studies . . . have proliferated since the displacement (c. 1960) of *Hamlet* as central tragedy in the canon"--though this opinion is belied by the existence of *Hamlet Studies* (1979-), there being no *King Lear Studies,* so far at least--and sees *Hamlet* as a kind of blueprint for *King Lear:* the issues raised in *Hamlet* are developed in *King Lear*. For example, Edgar, like Hamlet, "assumes the role of actor." "Like Hamlet, too, he assumes an antic disposition and prepares in public to don his Bedlam made-up. On 'this great stage of fools,' Edgar's play-within-a-play employs theatrical asides, actors' terms, and quick changes of symbolic garb" (p. 87); Edmund, like the unscrupulous Laertes, is prepared to "dare damnation" (p. 109); Edmund's philosophy of morality being relative, not absolute, parallels much Renaissance thought (e.g., Sidney, Massinger, Nashe) including Hamlet's "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (pp. 127-28); as Hamlet goes through his sea-change, so do Lear's fortunes change with Cordelia's intervention (p. 235); as in *Hamlet* the various attitudes of the two sentinels, Horatio, and Hamlet to the ghost present a multiplicity of possible views, so the "more complex *Lear*" reveals Shakespeare employing such a device in terms of the very structure of the play itself (p. 277). Thus whereas "Gloucester falls undignifiedly, Lear stands erect as he challenges the elements to 'Singe my white head'" (p. 276). Further, Hamlet's expostulation with Gertrude in the closet scene, and his accusation that her "reason panders will," which suggests a revolt against nature, anticipate "Lear's horror of nature and of his own flesh" (p. 314); more subtly, the author draws attention to "a Hamlet-like confusion of values" in *King Lear* where "the chief villain at the end becomes converted to a virtuous view, exchanges forgiveness and repents," not unlike the exchange of forgiveness between Hamlet and Laertes after the duel (p. 337).

But Elton's use of *Hamlet* is not confined to an enumeration of parallels between the two plays: he takes cognizance of interesting divergences. "In contrast to *Hamlet*, a Christianized version of the pre-Christian Amleth story, *Lear*, in Shakespeare's hands, becomes a paganized version of a Christian play" (p. 70); Goneril's understanding of "honour" is quite unlike the convolutions of Hamlet's thought, for she has no hesitation denouncing her husband for feeling compassion for her father, "Milk-livered man! /That bear'st a cheek for blows," in terms resembling Hamlet's self-castigation: "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I" (p. 117); and unlike *Hamlet* where old age is a target of mockery, in *King Lear*, as in *Macbeth*, it has a positive value unrecognized only by the wicked and depraved (p. 241).

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* "*King Lear* and the Displacement of *Hamlet*," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 50 (1987), 271-6.

In the concluding pages of this welcome new edition, in the section entitled "Criticism," Professor Elton agrees with E.A.G. Honigmann's observation that in much recent *King Lear* criticism "emotion tends to preempt description," and adds that "Lear's last scenes continue to generate more heat than light." But no critic has a monopoly on meaning, and when he goes on to observe that "those who find a kinship to salvation and the educational value of suffering persist in perceiving optimism; others find less benevolent closure" (p. 340), Professor Elton, like the critics governed by "emotion," "persists" in perceiving scepticism. In other words, isn't the reader's/critic's "emotion" the vital factor in determining his/her critical stance? Upon this phenomenological foundation is erected the imposing, and ostensibly objective, edifice of scholarship. But the truth of course is that we see what we wish to see. "Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?" Hamlet tauntingly asks Polonius after the play-within-the-play, moving on to "a weasel," and finally, "a whale," demonstrating to the old counselor the subjectivity of his own perception of Claudius, initially as clumsy and deformed as a camel, next a predatory weasel, and finally a whale displacing all memories of the former times.

Of course, if all is fair in love and war, all is fair in the game of criticism too, and each 'new' critical venture needs to push against some formidable resistance in order to develop its own momentum for take-off. The authors of *Shakespeare: The Play of History* use Tillyard as their *piece de resistance*, quoting extensively from *The Elizabethan World Picture* as representative of a too-simplistic view believed in not only by Tillyard but by later Goliaths like G. Wilson Knight, Lily B. Campbell, and Derek Traversi as well. Tillyard's picture of Elizabethan culture and society would have us believe that

> Elizabethan intellectuals such as Shakespeare could not avoid thinking within the ideological framework prescribed by orthodox political, ethical and scientific ideas; they could not therefore help but believe 'order' to be a fundamental principle of the universe and an indispensable necessity in the state. Shakespeare's historical plays were for Tillyard straightforward articulations of this ideology of 'order' (p. 14).

But the authors make a distinction between what they condescendingly describe as "the crude simplicities of ideology and politics" and "the freelance disengagement of the artistic sensibility . . . of a Shakespeare [which] could never have been contained within any generally held world-view" (p. 57). This is nicely put, but an unkind cut nevertheless at an older generation of critics whose model the newcomers find obsolete. A writer like Shakespeare whose vision is so large, so all-encompassing, is certain to exceed *any* conceptual framework imposed upon him, and this is what happens, as we shall see by and by when the authors discuss *Hamlet*.

After making an allowance for such tactics, one is glad to note that Holderness, Potter and Turner are good not only in demolishing but also in building. In this wide-ranging and fascinating book the world "play" in the title is used both literally in the sense of a game in which there are winners and losers, and ironically as signifying strategy and all that is concomitant to strategy: feinting, manoeuvring, and, of course, cheating. Whereas traditional literary criticism interpreted most Shakespearean plays as concluding on a note of stabilization, of the restoration of a dislocated order, the authors of *Shakespeare: The Play of History* argue that "the characteristic pattern is one of transition—transition perceived as historical necessity but complexly weighed in terms of its gains and losses, with the sense of loss always tending to predominate" (p. 2).

In their extended analysis of the second tetralogy *(Richard II* to *Henry V)* the authors, drawing heavily on Leonard Tennenhouse, but elaborating upon and developing his approach, see Bolingbroke as one pulled by two contradictory ideologies: the feudal and the monarchical forces that constitute together his historical situation. The feudal elements manifest themselves in the struggle between the new king and the nobles that ensues after the deposition of Richard II; and the monarchical elements in Bolingbroke's endeavour to deflect these feudal energies into the channel of religious activity, that is, the crusades with which the play opens, so as to establish his monarchical prerogatives over the kingdom. In these terms, then, the chivalric Hotspur, representing the feudal attributes, is stripped of them by the newly emerging monarchical Hal who assimilates and transforms them into Kingly virtues.

However, it should be noted—something not pointed out by the authors—that the chivalric Hotspur is not averse to having Hal poisoned by a pot of ale, a concession to the basest form of treachery worthy of a Claudius or a Laertes. In other words, Shakespeare is undercutting the values that the gallant Hotspur represents and making us look beneath the glitter and gilding of chivalric splendour, inasmuch as he does the same with Bolingbroke who, far from being chivalric, is a modern pragmatist.

As the authors point out with commendable skill and energy, the chivalric ideology is not discarded by the Lancastrian monarchy but is, rather, manipulated by it in the interests of political expediency as witnessed in the monarchy's repudiation of all codes of honour at Gaultree Forest. In this ruthless assertion of "strategic duplicity and naked power" (p. 56) is seen the emergence of the monarchy as 'The State' against which every act is construed as treasonable and worthy of condign punishment. Towards the end of *Part 2* the contradictions and the conflicts continue. Nothing is resolved. The rejection of Falstaff and the rehabilitation of the Lord Chief Justice are simply *attempts* at resolution. Echoing the title of the last chapter of Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas*, perhaps unconsciously, the authors conclude their analysis of the two parts of *Henry IV* thus: "The end of *Henry IV*, Part 2, is a conclusion in which nothing is concluded. . . . The Renaissance historical imagination conceived of history as a continuity of unresolved contradiction" (p. 61).

It is the unfinished closure of the historical plays that carries over, we learn, into *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and King Lear*, "Tragedies of Incomplete Catharsis," as they are designated in the title of chapter 8. The thesis advanced here is that the unthinkable, the forbidden (what Freud saw in the primitive notion of the "taboo") becomes both the desired and the desirable. Thus Macbeth "invokes the imagery of Witchcraft;" Lear curses the whole of creation; Othello, "driven by desire to kill Desdemona, dramatizes himself as Justice pursuing ritual sacrifice"; while Hamlet, "possessed by revenge, sees himself as God's scourge and minister (p. 151)." In other words, each protagonist sees himself impelled by a sacred force, and in the working out of its demands effects the collapse of a whole society. (For example, Hamlet hands over Denmark to a military dictator, Fortinbras.) The "ambivalence" of the history plays asserts itself yet more stridently in the tragedies. The old feudal order passes, and what replaces it is equally flawed.

Whereas the thesis is in general well argued by the three authors, *Hamlet*, as always, eludes the critical net. Consider the following statement:

> Rage, ambition, jealousy, revenge—in each case the tragic hero is betrayed by the mischief at the heart of his passion. Lear is betrayed in his authority, Macbeth in his fealty, Othello in his romance and Hamlet in the rationalism of his Renaissance idealism. Each dies, the contamination of passion exhausts itself and the world goes on . . . (p. 152).

Despite the neat pigeon-holing that characterizes this passage, one is uneasy about the bracketing of Hamlet with the three other tragic heroes. Far from being overcome by passion, Hamlet carefully devises the play-within-the-play as a testing ground for his theory. Further, whereas each of the three other tragic heroes creates his own dilemma, Hamlet's is thrust upon him by a situation that came about during his absence from Elsinore. And yet Hamlet copes with the situation: he needles Claudius into confessing his guilt even before the play-within-the-play is staged ("How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience"), and then again immediately after the staging of the play ("O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven"). Though Hamlet may be regarded from one point of view as a victim of "Renaissance idealism," there can be no question of Claudius's guilt—this is not a fantasy of Hamlet's—a situation that has no parallel in the three other tragedies.

The authors point out that "ambivalence" dominates the "new theatre which, in modern parlance, tends always to deconstruct itself" (pp. 152-53) According to them, then, Shakespeare's view of history as revealed in his drama is not the restoration of order but of a continuing sense of loss; not the intervention of the divine, but rather, of Machiavellian craft and cunning. If so, are we to dismiss Hamlet's "There's a divinity that shapes our ends" as wishful, puerile thinking? Not many readers of the play who, in the face of life's vicissitudes, have derived spiritual comfort from this reflection, or from Hamlet's later "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow" with its evident Biblical echo, would be prepared to entertain the opinion that these passages fail to carry conviction despite the force of their superb rhetoric. If Hamlet could declare "The play's the thing/Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the KIng," are not we as readers/viewers likewise caught by the beauty of utterance and forced into admitting its truth?

Shakespeare: The Play of History raises more questions than it can answer satisfactorily. But I say this in salute to the authors. They have succeeded admirably in demonstrating how many "cunning passages, contrived corridors" Shakespearean drama invites us to explore, and with their guidance the experience is instructive and rewarding.

R.W. DESAI

'Hamlet' and the Acting of Revenge. By Peter Mercer. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1987. Pp. 269. No price indicated.

Peter Mercer's main concern is to re-examine *Hamlet* in the context of the tradition of revenge tragedy. He hopes to redress critical imbalance by shifting attention from the ethical problems involved in revenge to the significant formal aspects which determine the structure of the action of revenge tragedy. Taking his cue from Maynard Mack's notion of "a paradigm of tragic form," recurrent features such as the Ghost, delay and madness are identified as crucial elements in a pattern which essentially registers a 'metamorphosis' of the hero through extremities of passion and extravagances of rhetoric from his normal social self to a monster of revenging fury. Since this "making of the revenger" invariably involves the assumption of roles and disguises, it is asserted that doing and acting finally coalesce in the enactment of revenge.

Dividing his study into two parts, in the first section Mercer locates the paradigm of revenge tragedy in Seneca's *Thyestes* and proceeds to consider Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587-9), Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (1599?) and Tourneur's (?) *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) as closely related Elizabethan plays which reveal a conventional yet complexly developing pattern of revenge action. Less important plays are relegated to an Appendix. The second section sets *Hamlet* within this inherited tradition of structure, language and emotion, while attempting to show how this pattern is consciously and radically transformed by Shakespeare.

Mercer's adopted method is refreshing and doubtless yields certain insights into the relatedness of the plays concerned since it enables him to draw interesting and convincing parallels between relevant segments of their 'inner-structure'. However, the technique can be overdone to the point of indulgence in excessive pattern-making, which ultimately proves distorting to the reading of individual plays.

A separate chapter on the Ghost initiates Mercer's critical enterprise somewhat superfluously, as the plays are subsequently analysed in detail where the necessary points could have been made. Mercer emphasizes the doubleness of structure of Senecan tragedy: a human drama played out against the presence of figures symbolizing malignant necessity. Mercer thereupon concludes that Senecan tragedy is not essentially a drama of moral choice or psychological motivation, but a bloodthirsty spectacle displaying action and events in extremity. This double-structure is present in Kyd where it creates a play-within-a-play effect. Only in Marston does the Ghost precisely command revenge, yet its Senecan *sententia* enjoining a masterpiece of cruelty exceeding the original crime, plainly acknowledges *Thyestes* as the prototype of English revenge tragedy.

Examining *Thyestes* Mercer finds its basic structure to consist of three parts: the appearance of the Ghost and Fury, the making of the revenger, and the revenge itself conducted as a ritual enactment of ingenious deceit. Atreus possessed by a savage mania is regarded as the archetypal revenger. Since in this pattern terror and pity attach to the victim Thyestes, not to the protagonist Atreus, Mercer argues that the "true tragedy of revenge" needed to reverse the Senecan mythic model in order to retain sympathy for the hero despite his deed of horror. The problem for Elizabethan dramatists therefore was to devise an action which turned the good man into a ruthless revenger and the villain into his victim.

Certain critical problems emerge from this analysis. There is confusion regarding Mercer's concept and definition of tragedy itself, particularly as to how far he actually believes tragedy to be an amoral spectacle. His adroit reversal of the Senecan polarities of hero/victim in the case of Elizabethan playwrights suggests uneasiness with his own proposed model, as it indicates some seepage of ethical values earlier repudiated. As for his notion of "the making of the revenger," Mercer's insistence on a total volte-face—the noble hero metamorphosing into a dehumanized monster—surely overstates the case, blurring individual variations.

Curiously enough, Mercer detects two opposed revenge actions in *The Spanish Tragedy*, that of the villain Lorenzo, more Elizabethan Machiavel than Senecan revenger, mirroring the revenge of the hero Hieronimo, and comments that the real tragedy lies in the good man Hieronimo turning cruel revenger of the Senecan mould. The flaw in Mercer's critical method becomes apparent, by extrapolating from Seneca and mechanically applying his revenger formula to both Lorenzo and Hieronimo, Mercer obliterates their totally different human motivations, dismissing lightly the hero's quest for justice in a corrupt world. In fact, Hieronimo's impassioned rhetoric of grief, pretence of madness, sense of delay, and conscious device of the play-within-a-play murder, mark Kyd's shaping of the Elizabethan revenge tragedy structure with its distinct moral shift. Mercer, however, lays more stress on the artifice of revenge: "what is ritual in Seneca becomes theatre in Kyd, and so the action of revenge requires the acting of revenge." Mercer's insistence on revenge as "a role that awaits performance" seems a critical oversophistication, a modernistic intervention (rather than insight) prompted by experience of the theatre of Pirandello/Genet.

Similarly, in *Antonio's Revenge*, by ignoring motivation it is possible for Mercer to view the villain Piero as essentially a comic parody of the tragic hero Antonio in his revenger's role; whereas what Marston probably intends is an implicit moral contrast between a false and a true revenger. In Antonio's vow invoking Tantalus and his murder, mutilation and serving up of Piero's son, Mercer is satisfied to find both an "alien" Senecan "persona" and a conscious re-enactment of Atreus's revenge. But Mercer feels cheated by the play's departure from the "authentic mode of Seneca" as Antonio'a revenge turns into a social and political action: the overthrow of a tyrant. Mercer charges Marston with violating "the logic of revenge tragedy" by diluting it with "moral drama." This precisely exposes Mercer's own failure to register the inherently eclectic nature of English Renaissance tragedy. Marston is deliberately accommodating the appropriated pagan Senecan model to a radically different political and cultural milieu which implicitly postulates a Christian moral framework even while challenging it.

The problem with Mercer's formulaic analysis becomes more acute in the case of *The Revenger's Tragedy* which has avowedly homiletic antecedents. Mercer accuses Tourneur of attempting to merge essentially disparate experiences by combining moral satire with revenge action. Though Vindice's act of revenge is as savage, amoral and artful as any Senecan's, his self-congratulatory pronouncement: "when the bad bleed then is the tragedy good," reveals Vindice as involved in "not so much a tragedy of revenge as an ironic comedy of moral retributions" alleges Mercer. Mercer thus betrays resistance to the "essential" (his favourite term) nature of Jacobean tragedy: its mixed mode, as he conveniently overlooks any possible difference between Elizabethan and Jacobean drama.

Taking up *Hamlet* Mercer observes that Hamlet stands not only chronologically between the Senecan plays of Kyd and Marston and the un-Senecan *Revenger's Tragedy*, but it derives its structural character from the superimposing of the paradoxes of revenge upon an obsession with human corruption: a duality of mode which, unlike Tourneur, Shakespeare shows as failing to cohere. (What Shakespeare shows in *Hamlet* remains of course the ultimate enigma in spite of Mercer.) According to Mercer, within the action of revenge itself Shakespeare develops ambiguities of emotion, rhetoric and action almost to the point of subverting revenge. This gets further deflected by the very different complex of Hamlet's melancholic sense of corruption. Mercer also finds the "world of *Hamlet*" so "realistic," so "conspicuously modern," so aware of the distinction between art and reality, that it resists the simplifications and extravagances of revenge tragedy. It may be salutary here to keep in mind that Shakespeare employs a highly suggestive mode of poetic drama with a wide and inclusive stylistic range, that *Hamlet* is no nineteenth-century novel.

The application of Senecan formulae and the pursuit of Senecan signals only reveal in what ways Shakespeare's play departs from and transforms the revenge convention it inherits. Dissecting somewhat over-elaborately the style of discourse of each character, Mercer finds, contrary to his straitjacket expectations, that Shakespeare's characters refuse to be identified as roles. Even the Ghost representing a past heroic ideal is subtly humanized, and is felt to concentrate less on revenge as duty and more on personal experiences of corruption, though this last point seems debatable. Hamlet is accused of a disabling "endemic discursiveness," while Polonius is rehabilitated as an aged comic reduction of Hamlet. Hamlet is also unique as a revenger because his "antic disposition" is ambiguously meant both for self-protection and aggression against the villain, which results in the villain's counterplot. Hieronimo and Antonio made use of art for the purpose of actual revenge, but this is no longer available to Hamlet for whom the theatre belongs to the world of fiction. In staging the "Murder of Gongago," Mercer argues, Hamlet is exchanging the dagger of revenge for the mirror of art as a moral instrument. Mercer not only notices a profound transformation in Shakespeare's hero, the villain too is markedly humanized. Claudius is acknowledged as a shrewd statesman whose pangs of guilt make him a moral being, in contrast to the unmitigated evil of his predecessors.

Mercer observes further that Shakespeare contrives to place Hamlet in more than usual problematic situations. When Hamlet is geared up for revenge it is ironically frustrated by Claudius in prayer; when he acts in passion it miscarries and Polonius gets killed instead; when Hamlet urges repentance on his mother it blunts his main purpose. The "mirror situations" of Fortinbras and Laertes offer only partial and distorting solutions to the complex problems of thought, feeling and action posed by the play. Ophelia's madness and death are intended merely as accidental consequences of Hamlet's struggle for revenge, because, Mercer urges, Shakespeare is preserving Hamlet for a more "resonant destiny."

In Hamlet's fortuitous escape and return from England Mercer detects "a kind of deliverance" of the hero by Shakespeare. The graveyard scene is viewed as analogous to the mythic hero's journey to the underworld and return to life. Though Hamlet himself may have a sense of "divine connivance," Mercer equates Providence with Shakespeare, emphasizing that the shape of the action ensured throughout that revenge in the traditional sense could not be realized. While conventional tragic heroes move from heroic coherence to tragic dissolution, Hamlet moves exactly in the opposite direction. Mercer then performs a *reductio ad absurdum* by pronouncing: "Not only is *Hamlet* not a revenge tragedy, it is hardly a tragedy at all" (p. 246). Hamlet is made to achieve revenge without becoming a revenger, which extraordinarily leaves him free of guilt (Mercer quotes Peter Ure here). Hamlet never converts his humanity and complexity of response to life to the simplicities of the revenger's role, since Shakespeare subverts the essential logic of the form by keeping the potencies of stage/art and real life separate: Mercer drives his thesis hard.

If one is to take seriously Mercer's contention that *Hamlet* is *not* a revenge tragedy, one might well question the point of Mercer's entire exercise. Hamlet is patently a very complex kind of revenge hero: a hero tormented by a Christian conscience. Though absolved of guilt at the end he has been tainted with murder, and he correctly identifies his own role as a paradoxical compound of "scourage and minister." This indicates how Shakespeare realized the quality of the revenger's role as both agent and victim in the more moral and Christian design of his revenge tragedy. Mercer's surprising reluctance to recognize *Hamlet* even as a tragedy must stem from the rigidity of his critical stance. Having privileged the Senecan model as paradigmatic, Mercer denies the relevance of alternative tragic patterns: more specifically the idea of a Christian tragedy. Mercer persists with his notions of Fate and chance in Hamlet underplaying Hamlet's own sense of "a divinity that shapes our ends" and his Christian theological concept of "special Providence." Elizabethan revenge tragedy from Kyd to Shakespeare appears to reveal a movement towards an increasingly complex moral sensibility simultaneously with a tendency away from the amoral external determinism of Seneca. In failing to take into account the widely divergent historical, social and cultural determinants shaping different kinds of revenge tragedy Mercer finally exposes the limitations of his formalist approach.

RUBY CHATTERJI

Goethe's 'Faust': The German Tragedy. **By Jane K. Brown, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986. Pp. 263. Cloth: $39.50; soft cover: $9.95.**

Connections between *Faust* and great Shakespearean plays like *The Tempest, Macbeth,* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are fairly commonplace because of the use of the same sprites (like Ariel, a witch, and Oberon), but key relations with *Hamlet* deserve special sudy and get much of it in this book. From the outset, however, Professor Brown differentiates between Goethe's conception of tragedy (*Faust* he subtitled *A Tragedy)* and Elizabethan forms: ''It is possible to read Shakespearean tragedy in this mode, but its real advent is with the neoclassical tragedy of passion beginning with Racine'' (pp. 15-16). Yet before long we hear of curious parallels between Goethe's *magnum opus* and *Hamlet*. First, he himself prepared us for such a parallel with his interest in ''world theater'' *(Weltliteratur* being his coinage). Secondly, whereas tradition has it that Shakespeare played the part of the Ghost in *Hamlet,* ''Mephistopheles was played . . . by Goethe'' (pp. 18-19)

The analogy leads to interesting points such as the tendency of world theater to deviate from Aristotelian mimetic norms, e.g.: ''The frequency of the play-within-the-play motif in Shakespeare, Calderon, and *Faust* reflects the extreme self-consciousness of such texts with regard to this trait'' (p. 20). Whereas the magical elements in the German tragedy lend themselves seemingly more to connections with *Macbeth* and *The Tempest,* the more psychological aspects tie in with the Danish tragedy. Indeed, although Brown does not centralize these aspects, she readily refers to ''Stuart Atkins, who has done so much to uncover Goethe's non-Aristotelian roots'' and who ''reads the play as a drama of character'' (p. 22). Moreover, Atkins ''does actually regard *Faust* as a real stage play'' (p. 23), not as partly closet drama.

Other parallels with *Hamlet* abound. For example, considerable evidence reveals *Faust* as a play about acting, even as *Hamlet* may so be deemed. The Goethean tragedy ''is, in effect, played before God,'' however, which invites a closer immediate parallel, as Brown shows, with Calderon's *El gran teatro delmundo,* though Goethe disclaimed Calderon's influence (a demurrer she thinks should be taken *cum grano salis).*

Religiously speaking, the analogy is of special concern because of the Protestant connection (symbolized by Wittenberg). Thus the Faust legend is ''a product of Protestant Reformation polemics,'' yet we must compare ''Goethe's hostility to organized Protestant orthodoxy'' (p. 26). This paradox interrelates with the Protestant-Catholic nexus in *Hamlet* (let alone Montaigne's skepticism, as in the Prince's famed expression of epistemological relativism). Of course many other sources are self-evident too, but Brown qualifies them this way. "German critics pursued various alternatives to the neoclassicist (essentially a Roman-French) tradition--the Greeks, the ancient Hebrews, and the 'indigenous' (i.e. western and northern) cultural ancestors, such as Milton, Ossian, and *above all Shakespeare*" (p. 31, my italics). She sums up her Introduction by affirming a paradox: that although she subtitles her book *The German Tragedy,* she finds the play mainly international in scope, yet "to many people the idea that *Faust,* the embodiment of the German tradition, argues against a German tradition will appear renegade" (p. 32). But why "renegade"? Why not "more refreshing"? Agreed, "the play was certainly not read this way in Germany in the nineteenth century" (p. 32), but then the text she discusses was not really the one then used.

If the *Hamlet* Ghost and Mephistopheles can be initially interrelated, does that cast light on the supernatural origin of each spirit? Brown, in relating *Job* to *Faust,* argues that "to the extent that the equivalence [with God] is there, Mephistopheles cannot be an evil principle" (p. 45); she sees the same thing in modern views of Satan in *Job* (citing the *New English Bible).* Some modern tendencies, however, have found the Ghost evil because of its vindictiveness. Yet with revenge seen as having at least a balancing basis in Nature (as conservatives posit in defending capital punishment), if not in God's Will *in toto*, such an assessment perhaps should be reconsidered (in that all that God has created falls into the category called Nature). *Faust(us),* too, originally meant *lucky,* and although the name has been taken some what ironically, Brown cites a parallel with the child Felix (Latin for *fortunate)* in *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*. Primarily, Goethe's "Faust is not a Nietzschean superman"--even as Hamlet, say, considers himself quite the opposite of Hercules (1.2.153). In his striving, Faust always seeks some higher good; likewise Hamlet is essentially an idealist.

This book rewards the reader who studies it very closely; in this review my focus perforce is limited. Much is made, for example, of the Earth Spirit (related to Rembrandt); the self-conscious theatricality of Goethe's work is seen as having "its origins in puppet versions of Elizabethan drama" (p. 64), such as Marlowe's play, which Goethe saw in this puppet version. Yet *Dr. Faustus* "points up the striking absence of language of power and sin in Goethe" (p. 74).

With the "Gretchen tragedy" we get closer to *Hamlet*. First of all, this tragedy "constitutes yet another level of play within the play in *Faust*" (p. 94). In this connection, Brown shows how "Goethe was in the forefront of the movement that established Shakespeare in Germany as *the* great dramatist," chiefly because he was "the great 'epitomizer' of nature" (p. 95). Goethe credited Shakespeare for drawing him away from Aristotelian imprisonment. In his criticizing Shakespeare for not being as effective on the stage as on the page, he was really criticizing implicitly "the contemporary illusionist stage, which cannot adequately accommodate a Shakespeare."

The Gretchen tragedy was "Goethe's most famous addition to the Faust legend" (p. 97); Goethe followed his model in "the representation of madness," for example: Margarete is compared with Ophelia. This tragedy-within-the-tragedy is "in a sense, *Hamlet* rewritten from Ophelia's point of view." Yet, although "the *Hamlet* parallels are so effective," the debt to Rowe, notably *The Fair Penitent,* is not supplanted. Further, "the impact of Rowe on Goethe's assessment of Shakespeare can be seen in the fact that the four plays Rowe identifies as Shakespeare's greatest--*A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, Hamlet,* and *The Tempest*--are the four most important Shakespearen sources for *Faust*"(p. 107). With these, she contrasts the plays that, according to Louis Marder, were actually most popular in the eighteenth century. *Hamlet,* of course, happened to appear in both groupings. The popularity of *Hamlet* then resulted from "increasing hostility to the Aristotalian rules."

All told, "clearly Shakespeare is . . . the great ancestor in Part I," and although "in Part II there will be other ancestors as well," still "Shakespeare is the gate through which we enter and return from the journey to those other ancestors" (p. 166). (It may be purely coincidental that Professor Brown teaches in a Department of English.) Thus "the song of the lemures . . . is adapted from the song of the gravediggers in *Hamlet,* "which was "the archetypal Shakespearian tragedy" used by Goethe. Time and space limitations cannot allow me, alas, to present so many other important features of this notable book--not the least of which are the dignified illustrations.

ROBERT F. FLEISSNER

***Hamlet: Film, Television, and Audio Performance*. By Bernice W. Kliman, Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988. Pp. 344. Index. No price indicated.**

If ever there is an age in the English-speaking world where no one wishes to perform or see or argue about *Hamlet,* I wouldn't want to live in it. Shakespeare's dialectical tale of life and death, revenge and honor, love and hate, self-doubt and self-consciousness, the life of the theater and the theatricality of life, is a kind of test for every generation: of its love of a story that reverberates down the centuries, of its tragic sense of life, of its curiosity about the relation of the outer man and the inner man. Bernice Kliman chronicles many Hamlets flickering on the screen and humming in our ears, gleaning from each of them new facets and angles of vision.

Professor Kliman does not limit herself to the better known film and TV versions of Hamlet--the Olivier (1948), the Kozintsev (1964) with Innokenti Smoktunovsky, the Tony Richardson version with Nicoll Williamson, and the BBC version with Derek Jacobi. She also talks about the Maurice Evans TV version (1953), the Dupont Show of the Month with John Neville (1959), the Peter Wirth version with Maximilian Schell (1960), the Gielgud production with Richard Burton (1964), the version at Elsinore with Christopher Plummer (1964), the Hallmark production with Richard Chamberlain (1970), Ian McKellon's attempt at the lead role (1971), and a Swedish version (1984). Add to these early silent film versions, and a number of audio recordings, and you have an amazing montage of young (and not-so-young) men in black wandering through the halls of Denmark. These are accompanied by frame blow-ups from the films (much more accurate than the publicity stills which often illustrate film books but have little to do with the framing of the film itself), accurate and useful lists of credits, and a very full bibliography and index.

Writing about Shakespeare in performance, live or recorded, is not an easy task. Many things strike us simultaneously at any one moment--the light falls on Hamlet just so as he turns wearily from a bewildered, thick-headed, white-haired Polonius, tosses his book down, and looks out to sea. It is not just the clash of the castle and sea, or the props and gestures, or the interaction of the two characters, or the words, or the "song" of the actor's delivery that creates the meaning. It is all of them, some at the center of our attention, others less important, on the periphery, held for a moment in a unified impression before that impression is replaced by another. The blend of skills and sensitivities needed is truly formidable.

Beyond the capturing of the significant collective choices of actor, director, designer, audio mixer, cameraman, the problem is to see the underlying pattern. What does it all add up to? Without insisting that anyone reduce *Hamlet* to a formula ("this is the story of a many who could not make up his mind"), we do look for meaningful patterns in the carpet, or it finally becomes a miscellaneous collection of "effects," "inexplicable dumb shows and noise."

In dealing with the first problem, Professor Kliman does very well. She is often sensitive to atmosphere, tone, mood, gesture. She knows that the differences between the media of film, TV, and radio require the critic to shift perspectives. Too often, Shakespeare critics forget that performance in a new medium is a kind of translation or analogue of the original text, requiring a new critical language, and a new sensitivity to the visual image.

Like most performance critics (including myself) Kliman struggles with the second problem, identifying the underlying interpretation of the production as a whole. For one thing, the spine of a production is not always clear. Especially in *Hamlet*, the performance is not always consistent, for the character himself is fragmented, mobile, fluid, pulling himself apart and putting himself back together again. Nevertheless, she could have done more to get at the why of things.

Not too surprisingly, she is more inspired when dealing with the better productions, where the directors are more thoughtful and the actors and collaborators more creative. She sums up the sound and core of performance, as she does Nicoll Williamson's as "nasalities, parodic whines, and mimicry of his enemies," capturing the sound and look of the performance, and the core of the interpretation of the character as a clown prince, a savage satirist, mocking the hypocrisies and stupidities of those around him as mercilessly as he mocks himself.

Fortunately, Professor Kliman is particularly well versed in the criticism and stage history of *Hamlet*. She sees production choices as part of a long tradition of performances stretching back to Shakespeare's own time. This is important, for as Professor Kliman argues in the epilogue to her book, performance is both criticism and creation, reacting to performances that have gone before, and in turn generating its own reactions in the future. The "criticisms" generating modern media performances are often literary ones. But directors seldom follow the party line of any one critic. Instead, they follow their own theatrical and filmic instincts. The influence of Ernest Jones' Freudian reading on Olivier's *Hamlet* has been widely commented on. But Professor Kliman notes that the film departs from it significantly, blending original ideas with stage tradition and the writings of Wilson and other literary critics.

Professor Kliman's is not the perfect book on *Hamlet* in the media. It sometimes loses sight of the overall argument and becomes bogged down in description for its own sake. But the book raises dozens of interesting questions, and contributes hundreds of colorful tiles to the mosaic of impressions which make up the *Hamlet* in the theater of our minds. For that we should all be grateful.

JACK J. JORGENS

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